

MARVEL No. 74 • SCIENCE FICTION • HORROR • FANTASY • ANIMATION • SPFX • 95p

STARBURST

CONAN THE DESTROYER

STAR ARNOLD
SCHWARZENEGGER
IN A REAL MEAN
INTERVIEW

ICEMAN

PHILADELPHIA
EXPERIMENT

PLUS:
**MICHAEL
DOUGLAS**
ON ROMANCING
THE STONE

FREE COMPETITION
YOUR CHANCE TO WIN VIDEO COPIES OF
WarGames & Sudden Impact



Volume 7, Number 2
September 1984 issue

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Opinion

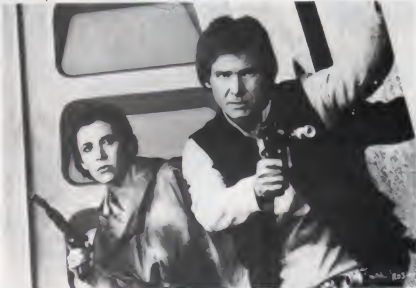
The top grossing films in America currently boast a block-busting block of fantasy films, initially setting the prevailing trend for the rest of the world's territories.

Ghostbusters, *Gremlins*, *Indiana Jones* and *The Temple of Doom*, *Conan the Destroyer*, *Star Trek 3*, *Romancing the Stone* and *Splash* are currently making so many record-breaking dollars for their respective studios (ie, Columbia, Warner Bros, Universal, Paramount, Twentieth Century-Fox and the Touchstone branch of Walt Disney) that their futuristic cash-flow situations are more than secure. However, since 1977 – “a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away” – when George Lucas gave us his innovative *Star Wars*, paving the way for a successful glut of highly imaginative fantasy films (whether they be horror, science-fiction, futuristic or just plain fantasy!), the Hollywood Establishment not only don't take financially viable fantasy films seriously, they somewhat contemptuously dismiss them as “children's” films!

This condescending philosophy was perfectly illustrated when Steven Spielberg's box-office record-breaking *E.T.* lost out in the Best Picture slot to (Sir) Richard Attenborough's parochial film, *Gandhi* in the 1983 Academy Awards.

If Business is Art, a logical equation lapped up by the Film Industry, why, then, did the gigantic money-earning *E.T.* lose out in the prestigious Oscar stakes to a film which would never begin to earn as much money? Because Hollywood hypocritically did not regard *E.T.* as Art!

Even certain actors with thespian pretensions tend to be embarrassed by having to compete with scene-stealing special effects in fantasy films! (“Acting in this movie I felt like a raisin in a giant fruit salad. And I didn't even know who the coconuts or the canteloups were,” Mark Hamill said about *Star Wars*).



But surely, any actor fortunate enough to be on a percentage of a big grossing fantasy film has his career set for life, mainly because certain more successful fantasy films like *Star Wars* and *Raiders* evolve into episodic serials, giving the actors a strongly defined scene personality. Like Lucas protégé Harrison Ford for example!

Admittedly, pictures like last year's *Return of the Jedi*, and this year's sensation, *Indiana Jones* and *The Temple of Doom* are family orientated, but are visually sophisticated enough for anyone, even with a jaded celluloid-appetite, to enjoy. Adult fantasy films on the lines of the Tobe Hooper directed *Polyester*, and John Landis' *An American Werewolf in London* should, theoretically, contradict Hollywood's view of fantasy films catering solely for children, and the accompanying merchandise. And John Badham's 1983 released films, *Blue Thunder* and *War Games* were not only entertaining, but thought-provoking in a topical and somewhat political sense, again contradicting Hollywood's stereotyped outlook on fantasy films.

Although Hollywood's attitude is that the fantasy genre's bubble will shortly burst, why is that a good ninety per cent of fantasy films made today are a financial success on an international level? Although special effects wizards have been recognised for their services to the film industry?

If Spielberg has, so far, been passed over in the Oscar ceremonies, can one seriously contemplate the likes of Brian de Palma, George Romero, David Cronenberg, John Milius et al even being nominated? But who knows? Joe Dante's *Gremlins* or Ron Howard's *Splash*, for example, could be possible future Best Pictures contenders, but when one thinks of facile vehicles such as 1984 Oscar winner, *Terms of Endearment* scooping the majority of prizes, so that larger than life performers like Shirley Maclaine and Jack Nicholson can have an excuse to win an Establishment laud, then perhaps forthcoming movies like *Oz*, *The Last Starfighter* and *The Philadelphia Experiment*, etc., might have a chance!

Frances Lynn

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SPLASH FLASH

Having just seen the film *Splash*, I felt that I must write and pass comment on it. *Splash*, to say the least, is one of the most satisfying and enjoyable films that I have seen for a very long time. A very witty script is superbly supported by the fantastic acting talents of all concerned, especially the phenomenal Deryl Hannah, whose ability to portray such a difficult character with such obvious ease and delightful sweetness must make her one of today's greatest acting talents. My congratulations must go to Ron Howard who directed the film with such clarity and kept the plot and the script sensible, where many less talented directors would have let the film run away with them. I do not (quite) agree with Alan Jones when he says that, "it is hard to feel instantly in love with Deryl". It took until the interval for Ms Hannah to fully affect me – but from that moment forth I was truly smitten.

So out of the deepest recesses of my heart I am asking you if you could please, p-l-e-a-s-e supply me with Deryl Hannah's address?

Paul Hensley,
Abergele,
Clwyd.

You ought to know better than to ask that, Paul. *Starburst* does not give out addresses of folk in the film business. Try the phone book!

AM THE WINNER IS...

I read with interest the letter from Robert Moss on the Oscars (*Starburst* 71). Although I support the main thrust of his argument, I disagree with some of his comments.

The Oscar is acknowledged as the highest honour in motion pictures. Therefore it is only natural that it should be criticised more than any other movie Award. However, contrary to popular opinion, the American Academy, unlike its inferior British cousin, has consistently supported excellence in its 57 year history. Even if the winners don't always make sense, the nominees usually represent the best five movies or performances of the year. There have been exceptions, of course, but no Award, up to and including the Nobel Prize, is entirely objective. When you think about it, the only way one could vote, fairly, in any given category would be, for example, for all actor nominees to play Hemlet.

It is true that genre and escapist films tend to be ignored at Awards time, but this is usually because the studio doesn't lobby votes for them in the major categories. However, as Mr Moss points out, Lucas and Spielberg have been snubbed on several occasions. I believe the major reason is that their relevant movies have already cleaned up at the box-office by the time the Awards ceremony came round. All the recent Best Picture winners were released in the last four months of their

Starburst LETTERS

Send all your comments and criticisms to:
**Starburst Letters, Starburst Magazine,
Marvel Comics Ltd., 23 Redan Place,
London W2 4SA, United Kingdom.**



Above: Deryl Hannah as Madison the Mermaid demonstrates some unusual table manners in *Splash*. Below: Hannah as Pris, the punky replicant from *Blade Runner*.



particular year. This period allows the members of the Academy just enough time to see the film and it doesn't suffer from over-exposure.

I attended this year's ceremony for

the first time and I held my fingers crossed for *The Right Stuff*, but like *Star Wars* and *E.T.* it ended up with purely technical Awards. I wasn't too surprised that we Brits didn't win any-

thing – we hardly deserved to. However, I believe we will bounce back with *Greystoke* in '85 – mark my words, the Americans loved it, both critics and public alike.

Keith Spinner,
High Wycombe,
Bucks.

You're not the only one who liked *Greystoke*, Keith. *Chris Parkes*, in the next letter has something to say on the subject, too...

HE, TARZAN!

Yesterday I was in a fiendish mood and decided to go along to *Greystoke*, hoping to really hete it and so be able to write a damning letter of criticism to your illustrious publication.

Unfortunately, it turned out to be the best fictional film I've seen since *Return of the Jedi*.

The apes were beautifully realistic and totally convincing. The acting of all concerned was perfect. Christopher Lambert gave a marvellous performance, making the audience feel his joys and agonies. And the photography was stunning.

The ending was perfect – the only way the story could finish (for now!). This film renders all other *Tarzan* films obsolete – none of them could ever match this, and I think the producers will be hard-pressed to make a sequel that can live up to the standard set by this.

Chris Parkes,
Turnstell,
Stoke-on-Trent.

Come on, Chris, spit it out. Did you like it or didn't you? Oh yes, watch out for John Brosnan's overview of *Tarzan* movies, coming soon in *Starburst*.

WILL GREMLINS BE BETTER?

After seeing *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*, I have to say what a magical film it was. Great acting, stunts, special effects, and comedy. Film of the Year, unless *Gremlins* is better. What surprised me though was that your excellent magazine covered it in one issue. Can we have some more, please?

Also, have you had a feature on *Jaws* yet? If not, please do one, a great film like this deserves a place in your magazine.

Finally, in issue 45 of *Starburst*, you had a *Star Wars*/Empire poster gallery. How about a *Jedi* gallery, and why not use this idea for other well known films like *James Bond* or *Raiders*?

Ian Weldon,
Highams Park,
London E4.

The reason we didn't cover *Indiana Jones* in any more detail than we did was because we simply had so much ground to cover this year. So far, a record number of fantasy films have been released in '84, and with *Dune*,



Above: Bill Murray, Dan Aykroyd and Harold Ramis (l to r) out to challenge New York's finest phantoms as the Ghostbusters. Below: A close encounter of the feared kind for the Ghostbusters. Watch out for coverage of this new creepy comedy coming your way soon in Starburst 76.



2010, Gremlins (good!) and Ghostbusters (excellent!) still to come, we've got our hands full.

And in case anyone was wondering, we've postponed our coverage on The Last Starfighter until early next year as the release has been put off for reasons we'll probably never know.

CHAMPIONING THE CAUSE

Your publication appears to be the only one of its kind which has neither been swayed nor intimidated by the censorship witch-hunt presently in full swing – keep up the good work.

Let's be frank, this had nothing to do with pseudo-Victorian morality, as Graham Kennedy suggests (*Starburst* 69), with the possible exception of Mary Whitehouse, the great majority of M.P.s who saw the film show given by the police were no more shocked than you or I. The only reason this Bill will pass through the commons is because it would be political poison to oppose it. Any M.P. who doesn't publicly condemn "Video Nasties" faces the prospect of being pilloried by the tabloid press...

The fact is, that unless we act, the Moral Minority will win again, because the public apathy and ignorance on the subject.

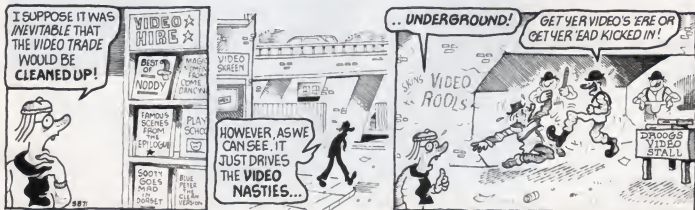
Some of your West Yorkshire readers may have heard me attempting to convince an obnoxious (offensive, disliked and odious, according to my dictionary – and it suits him perfectly) Radio presenter named James Whale (Radio Aire, Sunday-Friday, 10pm-1am) and being told to visit a psychiatrist, never fear, I will try again.

Finally, could you send me a small photo of Dr Sally as I had a small accident with a cup of coffee and this month's back cover. Many thanks.

M. Lyons,
Dewsbury,
W. Yorks.

We don't think you should worry about James Whale too much, M. Any radio presenter who can't win an argument without getting personal can't have too much credibility with his listeners.

Revenge of **FLICKERS** by Tim Quinn & Dicky Howett



State of the Mart

With Cannes buried for another year (and next year, Tokyo's first fest has the nerve to open eleven days after Cannes closes; I'll have to beam down my report from the plane!), time to catch up with a mass of news. Cannes left-overs (well, it is my *Be Kind To Dino* month) and all the Summertime buzz. Particularly, things Spielbergian which, if I can make it before the deadline lowers on my neck like *madame la guillotine*, I'll cover on other pages. So, let's kick off with the old good/bad news routine.... The good is that Joe Dante has won the *Batman* job at Warners. The bad, really awwwful news is that George Lucas, miffed, perhaps, by the ratings flop of *Star Wars* on US tv, has thrown in the towel and is completing an ABC tele-movie, written by Bob Carrau, directed by Lucas-pal John Korty and called.... Oh, you'll never believe this.... *The Ewok Movie*.

Aw c'mon, George. *The Wookiee Movie*, sure. Make a bunch. But those damnable, little, forever-under-your-feet ewoks... Help!

Prisoner Movie

Sssh! No one's supposed to know this. I hear from that well-known mate of mine, R. E. Liable-Sources, that a big movie version of Patrick McGooohan's *The Prisoner* is being planned. Indeed, Sir Clough William-Ellis' Hotel Portmeirion, down there near penrhyn-draeth on Cardigan Bay, has been put under tight contract for the next two years, to make sure no other movie, tele-film or even a Duran Duran video clip is made there. My spies are still working on this but if Alan Jones, He Who Knows Everything, knows more, then this is where he should speak....

Jimbo & Sheena

Priscilla Presley is too busy, what with being wooed by Bobby Ewing and all out *Dallas* way. So it's *Sheena*, *Queen of the Jungle* joining Roger Moore in his 007th Bond movie, *A View To A Kill*. ... Tantalising Tanya Roberts. The title, you'll notice, has been clipped by one word, the short story's opening *From*...

Mega-Movie Maelstrom

Trying to make cohesive sense of the annual American summertime mega-movie supermart is like trying to hitch a ride on the Shuttle - isn't it, Steven? Not... easy! The biggies rush out, chasing each other's queues, box-office records are wrecked (true or false who knows until it's computed in inflation terms, which it never is), stories are written, witty headlines thunk up and then another movie opens and my column's in shreds. Of course, final

Tony Crawley's THINGS TO COME



Tanya Roberts as Sheena, *Queen of the Jungle*, and will soon be joining Roger Moore in the next Bond, *A View To A Kill*.

returns aren't in yet. We'll have to wait for the Fantasy Film Chart to know the real champs. For the moment, though, looks as if *Ghostbusters* Dan Aykroyd and Bill Murray have one heckuvan edge on Joe Dante's *Gizmo* and *Stripe* and might even give *Indy* a run for his bullwhip. (Funny if they do, as *Dan* is in *Indy*'s film, too.)

It began, as usual for Lucas film, with the Memorial Day Weekend - and *Temple of Doom* opening right across the nation in some 1,687 cinemas! And bang, there went *Jedi*'s opening week record, by *Indy*'s \$45.7m to *Solo*'s \$45.3m. Not a lot in it; not when you realise *Indy* was in 685 more cinemas than *Han*. He also had more 70mm prints out, 245 to *Jedi*'s 164 and to the previous record-holder, *Brainstorm*'s 169 (which sure didn't do that much good). By Christmas, America will boast 600 cinemas equipped with 70mm screens. We have... oh, about five, I suppose.

Byron Haskin Dies

Byron Haskin has died of lung cancer at 84 in Santa Barbara. We know him best for his work with George Pal, directing everything from *Tarzan's Peril* (Lex Barker, '51) to *The War of the Worlds* (53), and *Conquest of Space* (55), *From The Earth to the Moon* (58), *Robinson Crusoe on Mars* (64) and finally, *The Power* (68)... plus his spirited tales in Kevin Brownlow's *Hollywood* series on Thames. A one-time newspaper cartoonist and newsreel cameraman, Byron had a rich life. He was silent star John Barrymore's favourite cameraman and ran Warners' SPPX department for eight years from '37, winning an Oscar nomination and collecting a special technical trophy in '38. He got a directing award for his *Outer Limits* story, *Demon With A Glass Hand* (by Harlan Ellison) in the final 64's season. Having shot five *Limits*, including *Behold, Eck!* with Adam (Batman) West, Gene Roddenberry hired him as an (uncredited) adviser for the *Star Trek* pilot, *The Cage* (later aired as *The Menagerie*), with Jeffrey Hunter as Capt Pike. The fullness of his life will be more apparent when the American Directors Guild's "oral history" with Byron is published soon by the Scarescrew Press. Not, I think, to be missed.

Spock, Spooks & Thingies

The next week, *Star Trek III* beamed up \$16.6m shattering *If*'s \$14.3m opening record, and even topping *Indy* that week. Again, it opened in more cinemas, another US record of 1,966

theatres! Next, *Ghostbusters vs Grem-lins*. Dan and Bill made it Columbia's highest weekend evah! at \$13.6m, a spectre or two ahead of Dante's demons, which proved the brothers Warners best opening since *Supie II*.

From then on, ghostbusting was a bigger national sport than chasing gremlins, although Joe's film created a new ten-day record for Warners. Yes, yeah, I know, damn, isn't it? But that's Hollywood. Just like kids in school. "My film did better than yours in five days." "Oh yeah, well mine did better than yours in ten days, buster!"

Indy's Cuts

As for the much headlined British censor cuts, they're no big deal. Really. This isn't a *Blade Runner* hatchet job. Three cuts, is all and Lucas aide Sid Gannis insists nothing was, or would've been, compromised to gain the British PG.

The primitive version of Christian Barnard at work is out, no hand going into the chest, à la *Videodrome*, but you'd have to be dumb/five/dead not to realise what's going on. The lowering of the heartless victim down, right on down, into the barbecue pit is similarly trimmed; and some of the sound (oh, that ear-blistering sound!) and visuals of the chief baddy being ground to a blood smear on the stone and people crushers has been doctored. That's it. "Insignificant," says the UIP president, Michael Williams-Jones. "Seconds, rather than minutes."

If you're still due off on your hols, the film remains uncut in France... oh, all of Europe... Australia, South Africa, Japan, even in Sweden where *E.T.* and most Disney films ran into trouble. So, no truth in the chauvinist rumour that the UK cut would be the world's print. No way. The world is more mature than Britain. Or didn't you know?

Dino - De... King?

Now you see him. Now you don't. Dino De Laurentiis was at the Cannes festival - of course, as it closed with his Bounty film with Mel Gibson. And for a few hours, Dino's name was high on the UIP/CIC (Take your choice) list of proffered interviews. Then, it wasn't. I wouldn't be surprised if he didn't want to chat with me. I've insulted him enough in this column - and I give him fair warning, if he continues churning out more of the junk he has released over recent years, I shall continue doing so.

For the moment though - pax! I've warmed to the old felia. And he's suddenly making good. What he's making, in fact, is a dozen movies (he's begun four already) costing \$150 million in all. As we already know the line-up includes our own, ie, Marvel's very own *Red Sonja*, being shot in Rome by the almost in-house Dino director, Dick Fleischer... and the Ron



Marvel's very own Fantasy Female character, Red Sonja, is soon to be filmed by Dino De Laurentiis.

Shuset-Dan O'Bannon scenario, *Total Recall*, helmed by Cronenberg, in Canada. That's the old news.

Dino and King

The new news is that t'other flicks include two more Stephen King stories, which brings Dino's King-score to four. They're not the two that haven't been shot yet (Romero's due to handle both *The Stand* and the last novel out, *Pet Sematary*), but a couple of new and/or short tales. *Silver Bullet* is based on Steven's *Cry of the Werewolf*, and *Cat's Eye* will star the *ET*/Firestarter, Drew Barrymore, directed this time by Mr *Cujo*/Alligator, Lewis Teague. Dino has a lot of faith in young Drew. "She's gonna" be a major star," says he. I thought she was. With the moppets.

Dino & Pals

With studio space whenever he wants it at his new facility in North Carolina and his lately reopened (and about to be sold off, if you're interested) Dinocitta spread in Rome, Dino can move on a movie as soon as he thinks fit. He needs that space. And more. He's so fond of his *Dune*-maker, he's backing two more David Lynch notions, *Blue Velvet* and *Ronnie Rocket*. Plus: *Platoon*, from the first Conan scripter, Oliver Stone; Mike Cimino's comeback (now there's a brave move), *Year of the Dragon*; Marie, with his Bounty skipper, Roger Donaldson; Polanski's long-delayed *Pirates* (Walter Matthau's one of 'em) and... "the biggest film of my career," *Tai-Pan*, which has already exhausted,

damn nearly bankrupted several producers.

"It's a good year," says Dino.

Dino & Daughter

I'd say the cause of this sudden onslaught - after 500 films since 1946 - is that his daughter, Raffaella, is doing more of the toil. At 23, she's in touch with what today's audiences want. So she's producing it: *Dune*, *Red Sonja*, *Total Recall*. At 65, Poppa is the deal-maker, the film-seller (country by country), the family cook... and, as the National Film Theatre's recent tribute dubbed him, The Last Tycoon.

Dino & Nephew

I mean, good grief, he's also working in partnership with his nephew, Aurelio, in Rome, on a Tinto Brass film. And if, come November, you slip into *The Key* by accident, and stagger out again, disbelieving all you saw, you'll know he's on to a definite winner there. However, Aurelio is more in partnership with his Poppa, Luigi - Dino's brother. Between them, this father 'n' son team is also pulling out all stops just lately in an effort to be Europe's top producers. They have twenty productions before or close to the cameras. Not one close to our genre, though. Maybe they're the real De Linquents.

Dino & Kong

One reason why Dino quit interview sessions could have been the laughter greeting his news that among the next ten projects (so he's a couple ahead of his brother and nephew) is a little sequel entitled... *King Kong In Moscow*. Would I lie?

Yeah, well, you see 'twasn't Jessica Lange's beauty that killed the beast after all. (Although the way he tells it, she didn't do Dino much good. "Without *King Kong*, Jessica Lange would never become the star she is today. But she never thanked Dino, or *King Kong*"). Old Kong is alive and well. Well, not that well. Nothing that flying the big ape to Moscow for brain surgery can't cure. Though why Americans would fly any big ape to Moscow for anything is something I don't quite get - unless he's a Trojan horse with 007 inside? Dino hasn't got it yet, either. The script isn't licked.

But he's serious about it, hailing KK as the biggest star around the world and talking whatever turkey is in Russian with Moscow film chiefs about a deal. Don't scoff! He's close to pulling off a deal with the Chinese to make *Tai-Pan* there - and he did, after all, co-produce *Waterloo* with Mosfilm in 1970.

Even so, *King Kong In Moscow*... Sounds like the Stalin life story me. And definitely a propaganda coup for Russia. But I can't see the sense in it, unless Dino managed a swop. KK for Sakharovs.

INTERVIEW:

Romancing the Stone

with **MICHAEL DOUGLAS**

by Alan Jones



I don't care who knows it. I much preferred *Romancing the Stone* to *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*. It had a decent original story, a beginning, a middle and an end, and didn't look like it had been made up by a computer that had been programmed to rehash successful ingredients and give them a pseudo sheen of freshness. So I was only too happy to seize on the opportunity of meeting producer/actor Michael Douglas whilst he was on a short promotional visit here in order to quiz him about his latest box-office hit, one almost certain to make it into most people's Top Ten films of the year lists. The fact that he is currently preparing *Romancing the Stone II* and is the executive producer of John Carpenter's new movie, *Starman*, made my talk with him all the more worthwhile.

Douglas, son of Kirk needlessly to say, initially attracted attention as an actor when he starred with Karl Malden in the television series, *The Streets of San Francisco*, but it was his first exercise in producing that was to win him the most acclaim. *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* won five major Oscars and was a phenomenal world-wide success. After acting opposite Genevieve Bujold in *Coma* he endorsed that success with *The China Syndrome* which gained extraordinary media coverage when the 1979 events at the Three Mile Island nuclear plant validated the film's concerns. After more acting assignments in *It's My Turn*, *Running* and *The Star Chamber* he focussed his attention on bringing a Diane Thomas property he had owned for 5 years to the screen. And so *Romancing the Stone* at last became a reality.

Douglas, an affable unpretentious man with a wry sense of humour, doesn't mind *Romancing the Stone* being pigeon-holed with *Raiders of the Lost Ark* as long as a conscious effort is made to explain that it isn't a rip-off as it has been around for a number of years. Mention the similarities between his film and *Indiana Jones*, like the rope bridge for example, and all you'll get is a resigned smile and the comment, "I thought it was extraordinary too...!"

But it was partly due to the success of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* that Douglas got the financial go ahead for *Romancing the Stone*. "Even though the tone of this picture is much different, after *Raiders* it was much easier to explain. It is the same sort of high adventure in *The African Queen/King Solomon's Mines* tradition but I never saw it as a period piece—all the original script drafts had the story in a contemporary setting. The original script actually had more fantasy sequences in the beginning of the picture and as the story progressed there were lots more cutbacks to novelist Joan Wilder's fantasy embellishments on the more sombre true-life facts."

Other changes in the script throughout the picture's long pre-production haul concerned the roles of two of Douglas' oldest friends, Danny DeVito and Zack Norman. "Although their parts existed we rewrote them so the character elements would be emphasised as they were realised to make them more tangible. When I hired Danny, the studio had mixed feelings but when you consider what we were trying to do—juggle adventure, comedy and romance—the comedy had to emerge once it was established in a very real way. The director, Bob Zemeckis, brought in all the alligator routines which I consider brilliant ideas in retrospect. If you've ever seen his film *Used Cars*, you'll know Bob is a sick young man with a wonderful wacky sense of humour. He and I are very much on a similar wavelength. We fooled around with my character too, making Jack Colton more a reluctant hero rather than the mirror image of Joan Wilder's books."

Diane Thomas, who wrote the screenplay, was an unpublished novelist who supported herself as a waitress when, on the urging of one of her close friends, decided to try her hand at screen writing. "Diane is very much like the Joan Wilder character and she wrote *Romancing the Stone* from this point of view. Her friend's agent gave it to me and I just loved it. It had a style tone that was admittedly dicey and I knew it would be tough to pull it off but it was fresh and innocent coming as it did from someone who had never had anything rejected and who wasn't writing carefully just to impress. Plain and simply, it was out there. It was the same with *The China Syndrome* which had been written by a documentary filmmaker whose greatest abil-



Opposite page: Actor/Producer Michael Douglas may not have as much stubble on his chin as Indiana Jones, but he's just as rugged. Below: Douglas poses in an exotic location with co-star Kathleen Turner. After her sizzling performance in *Body Heat*, Turner plays bickering novelist Joan Wilder who falls head-over-heels for Douglas in *Romancing the Stone*.

ity was making the nuclear machine come to life as a very real monster. That was the quality that shone through Diane's script, though obviously in a markedly different area. And although a lot of people had a finger in this pie, she does still get the sole writing credit—and you don't see those often."

Originally *Romancing the Stone* was offered to Columbia as Douglas was under contract to them due to *The China Syndrome*. "I did that under the mistaken belief that I could expedite the wasted years I was clocking up between projects. Quite the opposite hap-

pened as I just lay dormant. But revenge is a wonderful motivation and when *Romancing* went into turnaround at Columbia, I took it to Fox as there were a lot of people there who had originally been at Columbia when the David Begelman scandal had erupted. I don't have any complaints with Fox at all. The budget was nine-and-a-half million dollars which was tight but adequate and I'm really happy with what we accomplished on that considering what *Indiana Jones* cost. We didn't finish the picture until last October, so the period of time we had for post production



Above: Kathleen Turner as Joan Wilder and Michael Douglas as Jack Colton find themselves hunted by the sinister Zolo and his guerillas in the middle of the jungle. Right: Douglas and Turner in an intimate pose to publicise *Romancing the Stone*.

to get the film into American cinemas in March was unrealistic to say the least. That is the reason why Bob lost Cocoon as the studio heads don't have a true sense of how long things take."

Prior to *Romancing the Stone*, director Robert Zemeckis had only made two other films, *Used Cars* and *I Wanna Hold Your Hand* both of which could hardly be said to have caused ripples at the box-office. Douglas, though, took all the criticism for his choice of director in his stride. After all, he had been there before. "Nobody could understand why I wanted Milos Forman for *Cuckoo's Nest* or James Bridge for *The China Syndrome* either. Those two directors were both on the Hollywood hit list at the time. With Bob, Steven Spielberg had been behind him so everyone figured he was OK. But in reality he was washed up at 25 years of age as there were five years between *Used Cars* and *Romancing the Stone*. I figured this was a waste as he is so talented. Sure, he was under fire while we were on location in Mexico but he's got balls and isn't afraid to take a chance. That is why I'm a big fan of his. He learnt five movies in this experience. All the planning, all the storyboards went out the window when we hit the first tropical storm. Losing the road you've just travelled down is really tough, let me tell you!"

Douglas admits that he prefers acting to producing but as yet has not taken the plunge into directing although he did direct a few episodes of *The Streets of San Francisco*. "Producing just ties you up for much longer periods than you expect so I prefer to focus on acting although I don't feel as yet that I have a good shot yet with a good part and a good director. Robert Redford and Paul Newman waited till a lot later in their careers before opting for directing and I think I'll follow in their footsteps. All that time producing/directing could mean that I would miss the part of a lifetime too. That is why I'm acting in *Romancing the Stone* as well so I don't waste any time as I find the process so self-destructive. Here also was a chance of playing a character closer to what I'm really like. I

always think of Jack Nicholson for a part in all my films. I offered him *The China Syndrome* and even talked to him about this. But everything has a purpose and a reason for turning out the way they do."

As for his leading lady, the delectable star of *Body Heat*, Kathleen Turner, Douglas reckons he will be eternally grateful for her work on the film. "She was always supportive and assumed her role of leading lady with such responsibility that it was an example to us all. As she was raised in Venezuela she also spoke fluent Spanish which was a definite added bonus. When you are making a movie like this on a budget that seems like a lot but isn't really, you need everyone to rally round. We spent a lot of the movie muddy and wet, miserably huddled around little fires in towels without a trailer or a shower waiting to be sprayed down again for the next scene. She was great whenever we had to wait for the weather or cope with the endless travel arrangements."

With no opticals or miniatures to contend with in *Romancing the Stone*, Douglas likes to refer to the picture as a stuntman's dream. "It was a little dangerous, but not too much. We made the picture after the whole John Landis tragedy on *The Twilight Zone* so we were very conscious of that. Also I had done my share in the 104 episodes of *Streets* to appreciate all that stuntmen do. What you saw here, was what you got on screen. We did have one close call with a mudslide though that occurred in the first week so it sobered us up to the imminent dangers. But if anything it's the flying without a net quality that gives the film its energy. It has a live television ambience that gives it buoyancy. I'm actually a big supporter of television methods as the quality of film isn't proportionate in terms of cost these days."

In America, *Romancing the Stone* has been something of a sleeper, taking steady money even against such tough mega-buck opposition as *Indiana Jones*, *Gremlins*, *Star Trek III* and *Ghostbusters*. Douglas is looking towards circa 150 million dollars upwards in projected worldwide earnings with this one film alone.

As a result a sequel could be in the works. "I would like to do a sequel picking up from Jack and Joan on the boat. I outlined my rough ideas to the two writers. I hired just before I left to come on this tour. I'll see a first draft in August and if it's any good, we'll be in business. If it isn't I promise I won't ruin it for anyone. The dilemma for the sequel, of course, is that the two lead characters ended up together and now, in some ways, there aren't the proper dynamics for a film. For the moment I don't feel like going back to doing scripts with socially redeeming values. When I optioned *Romancing the Stone*, I had just got married and was expecting a son. I was in a really good mood. I wanted to make a film I could take my five year old son to. Because apart from *Never Cry Wolf*—there aren't any."

For the moment though, Michael Douglas will have to content himself with producing *Zoo Plane* and a CBS-TV mini-series about Montezuma called *Conquistador*, *The Conquest of Mexico* doubtless to be made in the studio space he leased when he realised filming would be tight in Mexico City. There is also John Carpenter's *Starman* on the horizon. "I'm the cosmetic executive producer on that mainly because the property came through my hands at Columbia a number of years ago and I really liked it. Basically it takes its premise from the U.S. Pioneer 10 probe that was launched a number of years ago and has just recently passed Pluto. Carl Sagan put it together with a plaque on the side depicting a man and a woman and where it came from in the solar system plus some pictures of life on earth and some digital discs containing Bach and Rolling Stones' recordings. That is the prologue of the film and the main narrative concerns an alien ship picking this up, freaks out over "Satisfaction" and sending a scout down on a recon. He is diverted off course by missile fire and instead of landing at the meteor crater in Arizona, where his race had landed 20,000 years previously, he lands in Karen Allen's neighbourhood and falls in love with her. Jeff Bridges plays the alien and he changes himself into the exact likeness of her recently deceased husband with help from a lock of hair and a photo album. Dick Smith is doing the change-overs. It's a light film, not tongue in cheek, but it is a funny, insane ride. Originally Adrian Lyne who did *Flashdance* was going to direct but he got yanked and was replaced by Tony Scott. What happened to him I don't know, but they hired John while I was away on location for *Romancing the Stone*. He's a great stylist and a good director who unfortunately is on the downswing at the moment. What I've seen of the picture so far looks great and I won't be able to take any of the credit if it turns out to be wonderful. I look at a first cut the moment I get back, and the only thing I have insisted upon is that Jack Nietzche, who did *Cuckoo's Nest*, do the music because he is just so great at creating organic sounds."

"You know something, I'm getting tired of making people be wrong. I thought *Romancing the Stone* would be a hit but not as successful as this. I'm obviously missing something in my ability as a producer and there is no good reason why I should go through these fallow periods. *Romancing the Stone* is the best kind of film as it belongs to the people. Originally I thought its appeal to the 25+ age group would be offputting to the kids. I mean who wants to see a film your parents like? But then the Summer movies have generated an interest in everything and we had excellent word of mouth. It somehow makes that 5½ year period worthwhile."



10 WAR GAMES VIDEOS TO BE WON



Wait! Before you enter this competition, just check down this list of winners of our last video contest. The folk mentioned here will already have received their prizes, but we figured they'd like to see their names in print, too. Go on, read it – it may be your name next time!

Never Say Never Again Video Tape Winners

Mike Jenner, Hatfield, Herts.
Paul Serbert, Pannal, N. Yorks.
Morgan Evans, Maesteg, Mid-Glamorgan.
Kevin Smith, Paddock Wood, Kent.
Peter Bellini, Hensingham, Cumbria.
Michael Coyne, Tettenhall Wood, Wolverhampton.
A. D. Stepton, Barking, Essex.

John Brady, Knightswood, Glasgow.
M. Seage, Westwood Estate, Leeds.
John Rutter, Tarporley, Cheshire.

Twilight Zone Video Tape Winners

Anthony Waggett, Leigh, Greater Manchester.
John Lees, South Shields, Tyne and Wear.
J. Clark, Lincoln.
C. A. Shergold, Gosport, Hants.
Frank Whitely, Whitstabling, Kent.
R. B. Evans, Ellesmere Port, South Wirral.
Alan Moore, Hull, North Humberside.
Mark Field, West Hampstead, London.
John Kerr, West Hampstead, London.
B. C. Bean, Pendeford, Wolverhampton.

Watch out for more results, coming your way in a couple of months!

This is it! The second of our fantastic *Starburst* double video competitions. We have ten copies of the thriller *War Games*, and ten copies of the all-action Clint Eastwood film, *Sudden Impact*, to give away, courtesy of Warner Home Video, in two easy-to-enter contests...

WarGames, last year's explosive film hit, has just been released by Warner Home Video. It is sure to be as big a blockbuster on video as it was in the cinema.

The exciting story stars the young Matthew Broderick as David Lightman, a high school student who inadvertently hooks his home computer up with the government's top secret WOPR – the Mega Computer that controls the entire United States defence system. Innocently he challenges it to a game of warfare. Little does he know that he has started the countdown to World War III.

WarGames is a tense thriller with a fast-moving story. The action is interspersed with some humorous scenes of clever light relief, which makes it an all-round entertaining film experience.

Now *Starburst*, in association with Warner Home Video, is offering you, the lucky reader, the chance to win one of ten copies of *WarGames* in this easy-to-enter competition.

Just answer the questions below on a postcard, attaching the entry stamp and submit them to us at:

**WarGames Video Competition,
Starburst,
Marvel Comics Ltd,
23 Redan Place,
London W2 4SA.**

Include with your entry your own name and address and desired video format.

You are about to play – *WarGames*.

QUESTIONS:

1. *WarGames* stars Dabney Coleman as a Government Defence Adviser. In which TV comedy series, currently showing, does he star?

- a) *Cheers*
- b) *Buffalo Bill*
- c) *Taxi*

2. Who directed *WarGames*?

- a) Steven Spielberg
- b) John Landis
- c) John Badham

3. What is the codeword which allows David access to WOPR, the United States Defence computer?

- a) *Reg*
- b) *Joshua*
- c) *Boss*

RULES:

The competition is open to all readers of *Starburst*, except employees of Marvel Comics Ltd and Warner Home Video. You may enter as many times as you wish provided each entry is accompanied by an entry stamp. All entries must be on postcards. All entries not on postcards and/or not bearing entry stamps will be disqualified. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into. The competition closes on 1st November 1984. Entries postmarked any later than this unfortunately must be disqualified.

Dirty Harry is at it again. Yes, as if you weren't aware after the massive advertising campaign, Clint Eastwood is back on the streets as the legendary street-wise anti-hero of the San Francisco Police Department, Inspector "Dirty" Harry Callahan. His latest outing is in *Sudden Impact*, which has been let loose onto Warner Home Video this September.

Sudden Impact is the fourth Dirty Harry film. This time round the plot concerns Eastwood's attempts to track down a ruthless ritualistic murderer. His investigation takes him to a small coastal resort called San Paulo where he comes across an artist called Jennifer Spencer, played by Sondra Locke. Little does he know at this stage that the lovely Miss Locke holds a deadly secret.

Sudden Impact is full of excitement, thrills and adventure and confirms for many that the Dirty Harry role is the one that Clint Eastwood revels in the most. So if it's hard-hitting action you're after, this one's for you.

We at Starburst have ten copies of *Sudden Impact* to give away in another amazing easy-to-enter competition.

Go ahead ... make your day. Just answer the questions below on a postcard, attaching the entry stamp and submit them to us at:

**Sudden Impact Video Competition,
Starburst,
Marvel Comics Ltd,
23 Redan Place,
London W2 4SA.**

Enclose with your entry your own name and address and desired video format.

So with this chance to win your very own copy of *Sudden Impact* there's a question you should be asking yourself. Do I feel lucky? Well, do ya, punk?

10 SUDDEN IMPACT VIDEOS TO BE WON



QUESTIONS:

1. Starring in *Sudden Impact* with Clint Eastwood is Sondra Locke. In which one of the following Eastwood films did she not appear?

- a) *The Gauntlet*
- b) *The Outlaw Josey Wales*
- c) *Honky Tonk Man*

2. Which of the following is not a "Dirty Harry" film?

- a) *The Enforcer*
- b) *The Gauntlet*
- c) *Magnum Force*

3. In which Clint Eastwood film do David Soul and Robert Urich star as vigilante cops?

- a) *Magnum Force*
- b) *Dirty Harry*
- c) *The Enforcer*

RULES:

The competition is open to all readers of Starburst, except employees of Marvel Comics Ltd and Warner Home Video. You may enter as many times as you wish provided each entry is accompanied by an entry stamp. All entries must be on postcards. All entries not on postcards and/or not bearing entry stamps will be disqualified. The editor's decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into. The competition closes on 1st November 1984. Entries postmarked any later than this unfortunately must be disqualified.

VIDEO
COMPETITION
TOKEN

ICEMAN

by Tony Crowley



Above: John Lone in the title role of *Iceman*. Right: Timothy Hutton and Lindsay Crouse encounter *Iceman*. Far right: The fur-clad figures of Timothy Hutton and John Lone.

This year, as I believe I've said before, is the cinema's Ice Age. A whole slew of movies are on their way here with "ice" in the title—or the action. First out was *Ice Pirates* which was really on the rocks—but no, one shouldn't speak ill of the dead. *Iceman* is a better prospect, although the title actor's comment that 'we chose not to play it like a horror film' does tend to somewhat diminish its potential.

The horror version is out anyway, Charlie Band's *Swordkill* production. Same story; different approach. Charlie's movie (helmed by J. Larry Carroll) has a 432-year-old samurai loner found stiff in some frozen wastes, soon reactivated and trying to complete his 1552 mission on LA streets. Yeah, easy to scorn but surprisingly good stuff from what I saw of it at Cannes.

Iceman, though, is something more like a *Quest For Fire* of the deep-freeze movies. Serious stuff. It's producer Norman Jewison's first sf outing since *Rollerball* and much the same seriousness pervades. Jewison isn't directing this time. He gave that job to Fred Schepisi, the Aussie who made *The Devil's Playground* and *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith*. Fred is even more serious than Jewison.

As I say the *Iceman* saga has much the same premise as *Swordkill*. Only this time the fellow discovered in an Arctic ice cave (the original notion of finding him in a crevice was too dangerous to shoot) is all of 40,000 years old. Yeah, he's prehistoric... And mute save for a collection, not to say collation of primitive sounds.

He's uncovered by a pair of scientists working for the Polarix Mining and Exploration Company. Both egg-heads are greatly interested in anthropology and cryogenics. The anthropologist is after a simple life for himself and his find, a life at one with nature. The cryobiologist is already hunting for a cryo-protectant, an anti-freeze for humans' living cell structures, so she wants to see what kept the iceman alive for so long.

"*Iceman* is a way of looking at us," stresses Fred Schepisi. "There's a wonder in looking at someone who is really us from the beginning. If you go to the zoo and look at a monkey, you see the similarities while perceiving the differences as well. Take it a stage further and you have a person who is the next step—not a monkey, a chimp or an ape, but a primitive human being.

How much of what we were is still there? How much have we lost? How much have we layered over? How much have we subjugated and how much have we actually forgotten: How much do we accuse other people of, even though it's really just our nature. If we can reach a better understanding of that, we will reach a better understanding of ourselves."

Television news man John Drimmer first wrote his story when still working as a producer and documentarist for CBS shows like *Sixty Minutes*. In common with most of the film team, Drimmer was all fired up with these futuristic tales of possible frozen-medicine. The idea of freezing Granny, Reagan or Michael Jackson now and bringing 'em back to life at some distant date – in future years, decades or centuries. Drimmer worked at the notion from the other hand. How about a prehistoric man alive and well and trying to live now? He scribbled it all down, shoved it in a drawer and when, as it were, his *Sixty Minutes* were up, he polished the yarn and found himself meeting Norman Jewison and his co-producer partner on his last eight films, Patrick Palmer. Two more cryogenic buffs.

his way to cast characters not stars, that was the easy part. Who, though, could be credible as the big fellow awaking from a snooze of some forty millenia...? Without resorting to Karloffian monster-types, should he go for someone looking the part, just close to it, or locate an actor who was highly skilled in the use of body, head and eyes and use a lot of make-up?

"The world was literally before us," Schepisi relates. "Mime artists, actors from theatres for the deaf, circus performers, ballet dancers, 'primitives' and tribal people, an Indian boxer on the streets of Beverly Hills and a five-times martial arts champion were all under consideration."

And all dropped in favour of a graduate of the Chin Chiu Academy of the Peking Opera, Hong Kong-born John Lone – in his screen debut.

"We chose John because he's a remarkably talented person," explains the director. "He's classically physical, with unexpected abilities. His eyes were wide and forward. Although he is Oriental by birth, when you put the make-up on what you had was an indeterminate person. Not Oriental. Not European. But sort of like some-

Rest of the cast includes Josef Sommer, from *Close Encounters* though more instantly recalled as the narrator of *Sophie's Choice*, as a corporate troubleshooter; James Tolkan, from *Wargames*, as a fast-talking lab technician who can (and does) fix anything; John Sayles find David Strathairn, as the scientist who can't wait to dissect the thawed iceman; and Philip Akin, from John Huston's *Phobia* mistake.

Whenever possible, Norman Jewison likes to produce his films at home now – in Canada. (That's among the reasons why he's been awarded Canada's highest civilian decoration, becoming an Officer of the Order of Canada). *Iceman* was the definitive Canadian shoot – on freezing, more like below-freezing, locations up in the northernmost reaches of Manitoba and atop the near Alaskan glaciers and snowfields of British Columbia, where *Bear Island*, *The Thing* and *Never Cry Wolf* were shot. Shooting began, though, in the relative warmth and comfort of Vancouver's Panorama Studios with four weeks inside a massive cryogenics lab. This set occupied two stages. The lab had a cold room, complete with a refrigeration system bring-

day's work close to the Alaskan border.

Three weeks of brave new vistas for Schepisi and his usual Australian cameraman, Ian Baker. "A physically exacting environment to work in," agrees Fred. "We were cautious with the helicopters – it's dangerous to get caught up in their glamour. They were there only as a means of getting to the unusual. We had tremendous respect for the glaciers. No film is worth dying for, no shot is worth a life. If you get to that point of danger, then you're not being inventive enough."

Iceman, however, was the very mother in invention... SPFX chief John Thomas (no kidding!) and his lads created live effects, for instance. In one sequence, Tim Hutton and John Lone pass in front of an avalanche and a crevasse opens up between them. No mattes. No super-impositions. Schepisi is against optical events for the most spectacular moments. Everything is authentic – simply John Thomas playing with glaciers. The ice cave where John Lone is first discovered in his block of ice is also for real: a natural cavern of multi-thousand-years-old ice and two-ton ice "flakes" lining the arched ceiling. Stewart locals told



"I was intrigued by the viewpoint," comments Jewison. "A look at progress with a porthole to our past."

Timothy Hutton plays the anthropologist guy finding the iceman. Tim was too young really, but Schepisi liked the actor's ideas, research and total involvement. Tim fell for the story first, then the character – "a little at odds with our society... not exactly appreciating the anxieties and pressure that people impose on themselves," says Schepisi. More important for Hutton, he'd be playing older. Only four years older, but at least no more of his gallery of troubled teenagers. Also, no crying. Tim Hutton is one of Hollywood's best sobbers. As Jimmy Woods once told me, "Tim has a great capacity for tears. Someone says lunch is gonna be ten minutes late and *poomp*, there he goes!"

Lindsay Crouse, playwright David Mamet's wife, who had just finished playing Tim's mother in Sidney Lumet's *Daniel*, became the cryobiologist. "She's strong, extremely dedicated, patient, lenient, gentle and extremely aware of the needs of others. A good mother!"

Although Fred Schepisi went out of

thing out of our past."

Michael Westmore, of the famous Hollywood make-up brood, designed John's *Iceman* look and Michelle Burke, a *Quest For Fire* Oscar-winner, assisted in the daily make-up job of close to four hours.

And no, that's not just a mass of body hair. Far from it, in fact. Just as John's guttural sounds were researched from the development of the human voice, his body took on the amalgam of scholarly advice about the origins of man. The absence of too much body hair comes from the descendants of the Mongols, said to be the earlier predecessors of the North American native population. As in the Inuit or Eskimo people, body insulation came from an extra layer of body fat, not hair. So there!

"Parts of my body were not strong enough for the part," admits John Lone. He put that right with intensive sessions in the gym, not in the Sylvester Stallone style, though. "It was a matter of tearing down the muscles and building them up again. I wasn't trying to be a bodybuilder but I was using weights as a way of tuning the muscles."



ing the mercury down to zero-Centigrade (32 F), and the thaw room, with a machine dubbed the SCATEM, designed by the art team to produce a controlled thaw. The lab's third room was the cryo-operating theatre, stainless steel walls, modern medical equipment and glass walls for the nearby observation room. It is on these sets that the *Iceman* comes to life. Again.

Next stop, Churchill, with the accent on chill. This Manitoba community is also known as the Polar Bear Capital of the World as it's directly in the migratory path of the great white bears. It's also a better spot than the Scottish *Local Hero* locations to study the *Aurora Borealis* of Northern lights. Fred Schepisi was more taken with the grey, angular structures and tunnel network of the Canadian National Research Centre's rocket range, which became his artistic station of the Polaris Mining and Exploration Company. Temperatures? Zero Fahrenheit was average; 25-below was usual; and one construction crew hit a bad day – minus 50!

Five choppers were necessary to transport cast, crew, lights, camera and ski-shut to the glacial peaks of Stewart, in British Columbia, for each

Schepisi about it. He was over the moon about the find.

More invention... Two of the film's interior sets, the flats of Tim Hutton and Lindsay Crouse, might have been built at the Vancouver studios, but were shot up at Stewart. They were broken down, shipped out and reassembled and became "cover sets" to be used whenever bad, or simply wrong weather conditions cancelled shooting outside. So no time was wasted on the Stewart locations. Good thinking!

Shooting finished with five weeks back in Vancouver, mainly the scenes in the Vivianum, built in the former foundry of Dominion Bridge, where portions of San Francisco's Golden Gate Bridge were once assembled.

"You can create some things in convenient places," says Fred Schepisi, "but there are some things that only a location can bring to a piece." And if nothing else, *Iceman* is extraordinarily visual. It's a Schepisi statement about "the majesty and simplicity of nature, its dangers and sheer awesomeness and the advisability of being at one with it." Which comes easy if you're 40,000 years old and that's all you know!

HUNDRA

*An Interview with Laurene Landon
by Tony Crawley*

Laurene Landon, who made such a big impression as Velda to Armande Assante's Mike Hammer in *I, The Jury*, has recently turned her hand to heroic fantasy in Mat Cimber's affectionate parody of the Conan type movie. With *Hundra* due for release by Thorn/EMI Video, Tony Crawley tracked down the blonde beauty for this exclusive interview.



Sorry about this, Sybil... But will you welcome please, the definitive new queen of the fantasy ladies. Canada's absolutely luscious Laurene Landon. We've caught her fiery act before in a few films, two at least; but nothing, but nothing as dynamic as *Hundra*. She is a female Conan, of course. That's easy to say – as high praise or damning criticism. It happens to be praise.

Hundra, for my money is better value than Conan. At times, *Hundra* is everything Conan should have been. It has its flaws, obviously; but I'm sure the soundtrack's babble of mixed accents will be post-synched in time for the film's as yet unscheduled release. No work needs to be done, though, on the movie's highly contagious fire and spirit, wit, as well as most adventurous fun.

The film was made in Spain and had all the signs of being an *el cheapo* Conan rip-off with some Hollywood blonde obviously being doubled in whatever action she had to get up to, before, just as obviously, taking all her clothes off and swanning around like Bo Derek Mk XII.

Boy, was I wrong!

Right from the outset, *Hundra* thunders, with the inevitable raid on the heroine's village as a whole army of real rotten baddies – beautifully shot in a wide angle lens effect – muster for the charge and erupt into rape, pillage and plasma spillage. And so *Hundra*'s mission is not merely to avenge the slayers of her people (an all-woman, Amazon-like tribe) but to start her race anew. Not easy for a boldly feminist warrior who declares, "No man will penetrate me – by sword or by himself." The extermination of the vermin who laid her homeland and people to waste, comes easier to her. *Hundra* slays about with sword and knife in a way that would have John Milius cheering... all the more so when we rapidly appreciate the fact that it is Laurene doing all her own work, including some extremely tricky stuntwork.

A lot of the credit for the movie has to go to the director and co-writer, Matt Cimber. Not a genre name. Not even, as he'd be the first to agree, much of a name among Hollywood film-makers. Yet he comes through – and how! – with the action and pace and dynamite set pieces. Also to be praised, is Ennio Morricone's music, which adds the thunder to *Hundra*. (I think that's enough of the thunder-puns).

Above all, however, towers the pluck and fortitude, the credibility and the dazzling beauty of Laurene Landon in the title role.

She, too, comes of age; and if she continues selecting her own career stepping-stones as skillfully in the future as she has in the past, a star is born! Better still, if she decides to hang around our territory (she's into a Western now), a most wondrous Fantasy Female has been born.

Starburst: Can we start at the beginning?

Laurene Landon: You can start anywhere you like...

Er... How did *Hundra* enter your life? I have the impression you had some input into this great fighting lady.

No, I added nothing. They sort of built the script around me. It's written for me. It's something I've always wanted to do – play that kinda superhero character in a barbarian-type film. And it's a comedy with some interesting undertones about women's lib. And so... well, I finished *I, The Jury* and I did *Airplane II* and I was offered an NBC tv series, which I turned down and a film called *Radioactive Dreams* – a major motion picture! – which I turned down, too. It was like a *Star Wars* comedy, like some Saturday afternoon matinee. But I'm very fastidious in what I choose, after *I, The Jury* and *All The Marbles*. I

didn't want to just take anything that came along. I want to think of longevity. Not just make some money now and this 'n' that. I'm very careful because I get a lot of offers with a lotta nudity or sex.

Surprise, surprise.

I'm not interested in doing that. Sure, I did a little in *Hundra*. I didn't have to, either. There was a girl doubling me in the nude scene. She was much heavier than I am. I'm sure Matt chose her and shot her on purpose...

That's the usual trick.

They filmed her for two or three days and I'm watching and this 'n' that, and I'm going: "Oh God, how can she do that? How can anybody do that?" When I said, I'd do the scene, everybody was stunned. But I knew the audience wouldn't believe she was me. How could I let them see it's me the whole movie through, except for that one backwards fall and this nude scene?

Soon as I said I'd do it, Matt says, "Well, maybe we can write in a little longer scene where, you know, bare-back, bare-ass, and you come off the horse and play in the

water..." I said, "No way! You do that scene real quick and with the sun behind in the late afternoon..." And, thank God, you only see a little.

Yeah, but as Tracy said about Hepburn, what see is choice!

Thank you... Well, it's not like the camera zooms in on my boobs... that I don't even have! (Laughs). As a matter of fact, when they saw it on-screen, Matt said, "I don't know, maybe we shoulda used the double. At least, she had something up top. She doesn't have... mosquito bites!" That was funny, though. You did so many stunts, weren't they worried about a bad accident – and bye-bye *Hundra*? I did everything except, as I say, the fall backwards from the roof. They wouldn't let me do that. I would have done it! They just wouldn't let me. They said it was much too precarious and I'd kill myself. I said, "Let me do it! Let me do it!" No – because the stunt-double girl is going to land on boxes. "I don't care," I said, "I'll do it anyway," because I did everything else. I was kinda crazy on that film! You call the movie a comedy...



Opposite page: Laurene Landon, as *Hundra*, aiming to be a new Starburst Fantasy Female. Below: Laurene deals with a couple of barbaric baddies in the savage style of *Hundra*.

HUNDRA

► The dialogue's very clever. There's a lot of things women are going to relate to. It's really a sociological picture more than mythological — like *Conan* was. *Conan* was wizardry and special effects, which is great. *Hundra* has to do with society as it was back then. How women were suffering, oppressed, under men's rule and domination — and they still are to a degree today. It's interesting because the picture was written by two men. You'd think it was by women.

Well, Matt, who's one of the writers, is a much married guy. He's heard it all.

Yeah, he's been married to Jayne Mansfield... He's wonderful, wonderful! One of the best directors I've worked with. I know he's not as well known as Robert Aldrich or people like that. He's very under-rated. This film is his chance. His time has come. And he deserves it. I hope, more for him than me, that this picture makes it. He worked so hard. He did almost everything. He produced it with John Ghafarri. He co-wrote it with John Goff. He directed it. And he solved all the many problems we had. Every night, he'd stay up to write new scenes. There was a script, but every day it changed.

Your training programme for the movie must have been rough.

Oh my God... The training was more rigorous than what you see on film. I went to horseback riding school three months prior to the shooting. I went to Spain three months early to do that. I jumped horses for three months. I jump horses all the time. I'm an equestrienne. I'm not great but I sure worked at it. I selected my own horse — I love very spirited horses. Some horses, you get on their back and they looked like they're drugged. This one, I jumped on his back and he was gone! I left everybody in the dust. He'd get even with me a lot, though. He threw me off so many times, I cracked my back, fractured my tail bone in the beginning and had to take all kinds of codeine. I was in agony!

So, I did riding school for three hours each morning. Right after that on the same ranch, we had sword-fighting lessons... for another three hours! Right after that, I'd go home, have some lunch and then — the gym. Which I hated! I had to work on a Nautilus machine (she spits out the word) everyday, then aerobic classes. By the end of the day, I was so exhausted I'd be in bed by 8pm. Never went out on a date the whole three months.

Now that's rough! Were they real swords? Oh yes — are you kidding! I nearly lost my life two or three times and that's the truth. Ask Matt. Ask anyone. I nearly lost an eye. I have a scar across the top of my eye here. We were shooting on a huge rock. Three stuntmen were coming at me; the last three I kill. As I'm fighting them and leaning back over the cliff, I slipped — it was about the third take, I think. Sure, I did the jump off the rock. I was supposed to do that. But not to fall backwards over it. As I did that, this guy comes at me with his sword — an accident, of course — and he slices me across the eye. My eye was covered with blood. I couldn't see for five, ten minutes. I was certain I'd lost my eye.

Phew. What about the nifty knife-throwing? Did you like that? Good! I did all of that. Matt said, "You can't do this stuff!" I said, Hell, no! Because he didn't even do it. But they knew the one way to get me to do something was to dare me into a stunt. They knew I was crazy enough to try. So I did it. I picked up the knives. I didn't look at the guy, I'm standing there talking with somebody and just... flick-



Above: The charming features of Laurene Landon, all made-up and looking for action as *Hundra*. Right: Not only is she a beautiful looker, and a good fighter, she can also fly a horse!

ing those knives away. I did all the knife throwing. I did everything. I had a great time doing it. I love action scenes more than love scenes.

How many people did you kill? Ever work it out?

Probably about 32, in all. There were sixteen warriors in the beginning. You said you'd always wanted this kind of character. Why? Were you a comic freak as a kid?

I wanted *Hundra* because she's a new superhero, right? I don't believe I'm really copying anybody in history. And I suppose I did manage to add in a few little things. A little sarcasm and teasing. Every time I'm fighting the guys, you'll notice I have a smile on my face. Because I'm really enjoying myself. A lot of people have said that to me: You really enjoyed beating the daylight out of those guys, didn't you? And I did.

Back to *Hundra*. I love your costume.

I think they're terrific, too. But if I had a finger in the design, I'd have been completely covered. They kept bringing this costume to me and there was much more to it then: it was longer, with sleeves and cut higher. They took the scissors and cut out the middle, cut off the sleeves... until we got this little fascimile of a prehistoric bikini.

Didn't do Raquel Welch any harm.

It looks... okay. I hope you didn't get the impression I'm trying to be a sex-symbol tease.

Not the way you waste all those guys, no. Good. The one thing I pray to God people

don't say is that I'm trying to be sexy — or, that I look weak with the sword.

Are you kidding me? You look as if you could behead *Conan*. You handle yourself better than Sandahl Bergman did.

Oh, but she was very good in *Conan*. Very beautiful girl. The most incredible body I've ever seen... The men are the sex objects in *Hundra*. They are times when I look sexy — but without trying to.

That's like you are now. It's natural. They wanted somebody who would attract the men and the women, who wouldn't be a threat to the women in the audience. I don't think I'm a threat to them. Men will like the picture. But women are gonna love it! Yeah, it would have been a totally different movie with Bo Derek in it. She'd have spent ten minutes in the nude on the horse for a start... and a much longer, more explicit love scene with the handsome doctor.

I don't want to sound conceited, but I think I'm much more believable than she would have been. She's very beautiful, very glamorous and everything. But I don't think she'd have taken the risk I took. She's too... feminine. A very lovely, lovely girl. I think she's the most beautiful woman in the world, I really do.

How do you rate yourself? You keep putting yourself down.

I'm not putting myself down.

Sounds like it... I wanted to be covered up by my costumes... I've got a bosom like mosquito bites... Sandahl and Bo are better looking..."

This is true. I don't think people of myself as a sex-symbol. I don't think people think of me that way, either. I didn't play a sex-symbol in *I, The Jury*. (We were going to do three more Mike Hammer films after that, but it didn't do well in America). I didn't play a sex-symbol in *All The Marbles* which, believe it or not, was the No 1 picture in Japan in 1982. I'm not about to argue with *Hundra*! And I'm glad I didn't play sex types or I'd be typecast as this dizzy blonde, playing dumb blondes, which is something I haven't played yet. Except, in *Airplane II*. But that was just a small part. We all had small parts in that. Oh, I've been offered dizzy blondes and this 'n' that, but I'm not interested. That's fine for some people.

(Deep sigh). How do I say this without you misunderstanding what I'm saying...? I think in the '80s now, instead of women being exploited or dominated, we're coming out. Being ourselves. Being independent. We're saying, "Here I am! I can stand up for myself. I'm not a little girl. I'm not helpless anymore." I'm not really for women's lib. I love going out on dates. I also love being independent. I live alone in West Hollywood. I am single. I'm 25 on St Patrick's Day (March 17). I take care of myself and I always have. I just go with the flow.

And I think pictures are going that way, too. They're doing the *Sheena* picture. Sandahl Bergman has done her *She* picture. *Supergirl* is coming. And one or two others. Women are coming out! And *Hundra* is the first picture of this type.

You're fussy about your parts, but aren't you going to get a lot of super-heroine offers now?

I don't care. There's a trend right now for action-pictures. Everyone wants to escape. *Hundra* is pure escapism, nobody's kidding

anybody. Sure, it has a couple of messages about women and women's lib, but our intention is to have people walk out of the theatre say, "I had a good time." We had that, all right.

We had dinner with some people after the film last night and one of the women said it better still. "I walked out of that theatre," she said, "feeling so proud I'm a woman." If people feel that way, I'm very, very pleased with the outcome.

What's next then - *Hundra II*?

We've no plans for that. Yet. I'm doing *Yellow Hair* and *The Pecos Kid*, a comedy Western. I'll

be pretty well doing my stunts again. Ken Robertson plays *The Kid* - he looks about 18, but he's almost 40. Matt has changed the story all around. *The Kid* is very shy, very weak, lives on a farm, wants to be a gentleman and meet all these beautiful girls. And I'm the gunslinger, the gun-toter and this 'n' that. It's gonna be like *Raiders*. Lots of stage-coach riding, blowing up prisons, and me saving lives and constantly protecting *The Kid*.

Hundra Meets Cat Ballou...?

I love it. I love horses, you see.

And swangs and now guns...? (Huge smile). I like being a man!



DIRECTING HUNDRA

A Brief Interview
With Mat Cimber
By Tony Crawley

Hundra was, I said to director Matt Cimber, a more low-key movie than his last. "Yeah," he laughed, "a little opposite to the last girl I worked with." Last time we met, Matt was with his *Butterfly* film clan - led by Pia Zadora and her Daddy Warbucks hubby. All ritz and glitz, cripes and hypes. "We figured we'd do it different this time," said Matt.

He's been around the movie block a few times has Matt. He was, for example, the last husband of Jayne Mansfield. The perfect guy, therefore, to explain the difference between our Newest Fantasy Lady and the rest of the field.

"The thing about Laurene is honestly, when you look at her, you look at the impression she gives. By her physical stature. Her hair. And you say, she's not an actress. Because she doesn't look like Isabelle Huppert. Only Isabelle Huppert is an actress. You know what I mean? You know how it is. Real actresses wear dirty jeans and are, like, very deep. You got to the Berlin festival and you see all the young kids in films and you figure that the film business has come to the point where there's no more baths taken. The only way to make a film is that you don't take a bath."

Laurene: He speaks from experience.

Matt: I've worked with Orson Welles many times. He's a very clean man. He takes baths every day...

Laurene: Tell him how he takes a bath.

Matt: ... and he's creative!

Laurene: He takes his bath in the swimming pool!

Matt: So, you look at Laurene and you think: Oh, she's a big dumb blonde. That's American stigma! It is stigma! Jayne went

through the same stigma. Laurene reminds me so much of Jayne... Jayne went before the Queen of England and read Shakespeare. Before the King and Queen of Sweden, she played Paganini on a violin like you could not believe. In America, 20th Century-Fox said: "You're never to play the violin again - it'll kill your image. You'll be finished!" Nobody ever said in the Press that Jayne had a Master's degree in English from the University of Texas. No, you're a dumb blonde. Stay that way. They'll love you, darling. They'll love you to pieces and you'll make a lot of money.

Now, Laurene plays a classical piano that'll blow you away. They say - hey, but that's not the image.

Laurene: I'm a walking contradiction, that's what everybody calls me.

Matt: And the point is, acting-wise, she's so very good. Look at her in her birth scene in the film.

Laurene: I didn't know how to do that at first. I never saw a baby being born.

Matt: I've sat there, I've seen babies being born. And I read a book about how the Chinese used to hang women, tie them up and hang them... So I came up with the idea of hanging on to a pole. *Hundra*'s so physical, you see. It's a tough scene and

important. Women identify with that scene. *Hundra* never cries. She's even grinning at the most painful thing a woman can go through. They say a man could not sustain the pain of childbirth. Then, her doctor guy comes in and says, "Scream, all women scream - don't be afraid." And the only moment you ever hear *Hundra* scream is when she's having her child.

I could have dropped that scene, or made it very short, but it's important. She really suffers for that child and only a woman understand. We men will never understand the feeling of giving birth for them. And Laurene acts so well in that scene - I couldn't cut it.

She did one scene with a hole in her head... You know where she goes to sleep with that monster guy and he kicks her in the stomach. She's on the ground, slips over and hits her head on a rock. Poor kid, I never saw such a hole in the head. We had four hours to finish the sequence. We stuffed her head with cotton wool to stop the bleeding and she continued. We finished that scene by 7.30am.

And she missed that horse twice - the leap on the horse. Missed it twice and flipped again.

Laurene: Tell him about the scene in the water!

Matt: Yeah, where she's riding bareback. That's very difficult, you know. The horse has no saddle. She's bare-back. The horse is bare-back. She slips off the horse - into the Mediterranean. The horse kicks her in the head. She falls into the sea and the tow pulled her out. The crew had to leap in to rescue her...

Crawley: You know what they say? Beware of the undertow.



The NEVER ENDING STORY

Preview by Tony Crawley

Starburst takes a first look at the West German film version of a best-selling West German novel: Wolfgang Petersen's movie of Michael Ende's *The Never Ending Story*.

It is, of course, one almighty gamble for any small film industry outside of Hollywood (and every film industry, excepting India's, is small alongside Hollywood) to try to muscle in on the fantasy act. We're lucky in Britain. The Hollywoodians come to us. . . It is (relatively) cheaper to make the mega-bucks' movies here. More important, it's worth any of the logistical or financial inconveniences in order to make use of any world-respected movie technicians and, in particular, our veritable flood of special effects wizards.

When a pair of West German producers first announced their intention of making a fantasy movie—and nothing small, Mark you, not at around \$27 million it isn't—it caused a smirk or two in Hollywood. What, went the word, do *they* know? What the Germans knew was that fantasy works. And that top-notch fantasy works best of all. So, okay, they'd chance their arm.

Their immense gamble is paying off. Since April, *The Never Ending Story* has been the



No.1 film in the Fatherland. Most of Europe will have it at Christmas. Before then it will earn its biggest test when it opens big – in America. It should do well. A couple of American kids have the major roles and by the time the Luke/Elliott/Indy fans get to see – and hear – it, they'll probably think it's an American film, anyway. So might we, come to that...

And to be absolutely honest, so what? It's what we see that counts, not where it was made, right?

The director is Wolfgang Petersen, who made the previously biggest Fatherland film (in both budget and box-office terms), *The Boat* – due about now, I'd say, for its BBC-TV mini-series version. His producers are Bernd Eichinger, 33, the man behind the other huge German hit of recent years, *Christiane F.* – and Dieter Geissler, 45, a former actor, concerned with the production of such diverse movies as Polanski's *What?* (1972), Costa-Gavras' *State of Siege* (1973) and this year's German hit at Cannes, *Out of Order*.

Wisely, this trio with all the clout in Germany, came to Britain to find their all-important effects man. Those chose well – probably upon the recommendation of effects make-up man Colin Arthur, who had worked on the *Christiane F.* film. They chose Brian Johnson, a double-Oscar winner for *Alien* and *Empire Strikes Back* and connected with all manner of films from 2001 to Hammer's *Phantom of the Opera*, *Specs* 1999, *Dragonslayer* and even *The Revenge of the Pink Panther*!

Brian, who is now making his directing debut for producer Geissler, brought with him people like Colin Arthur, model-maker Guy Hudson, "practical effects" guys Andrew Kelly, John Gant, Phil Knowles, plus Ron Hone for mechanics and Barry Whitrod for electricals. Between them, their credits run the similar gamut from 2001 and the *Superman* films to *Conan*, *Jedi*, various Bond and, in Phil Knowles' case, *Gendhi*.

Also among Brian's Boys was the Italian animation engineer, Giuseppe Tortora, associated with Carlo Rambaldi on *King Kong* and *Close Encounters*.



Top Left: Noah Hathaway astride the Luck Dragon. Left: Barrett Oliver roars the Book of the film. Above right: The Rock Biter! Below: Noah Hathaway encounters the Wise Man.



The NEVER-ENDING STORY

What do they know, indeed. . . I mean, by any standards that's one Olympic effects team.

And yet, it has to be admitted that when *The Never Ending Story* first flew at Easter, the German critics offered a mixed, at least, reaction. Basically the view seemed to be: Is this what the fuss has been all about, then?

The problem was at least two-fold. One, Petersen & Co had dared make a film (even half) of a much cherished fable, Michael Ende's novel (now available in Penguin, I understand). Two, the critics have given their hearts to *E.T.* and didn't want to be caught with their hearts on their sleeves, admitting to that famous child with us all, quite so soon again. (Besides, any nation's critics are usually the last to want to recognise the worth of something, anything home-made. What do we know, is their line!)

And abroad? In California, for example, the film was first sneak-previewed to an audience of what Wolfgang Petersen called "older teens". They didn't recognise any name on the credits, nor any face on the screen and they'd never heard of the book, which is only now coming out in English. "So," says Petersen, "it didn't result in much more than open puzzlement on just what it was all about."

The same print was later sneaked to a much younger audience, closer to the ten-year-old heroes. "This time," reports the director, "the results were overwhelmingly positive." The rating cards returned an average of 98% in the Excellent and Very Good columns.

And so, what we have here is yet another film that Disney could, should have made and will be regretting leaving alone for many years to come.

Basically, it's the tale of a ten-year-old called Bastian. A lonely lad. His mother is dead. His father is too busy to deal with him; besides, he doesn't know how to communi-

cate with him. (If Bastian wasn't in this film, he'd be with Gene Hackman in *Misunderstood*!) He's shy, withdrawn, has problems at school—he's "different", you see. He resorts, therefore to his own vivid imagination. The kid's a bit of a dreamer.

Almost mystically, he's drawn to a book in Koreander's store. There's two serpents on the cover, forming a gold and silver oval by biting each other's tail. Bastian simply grabs the book and makes a run for it. The bookseller sees all and simply smiles to himself. High in the attic above his school, Bastian starts reading the book. Title? Why, *The Never Ending Story*, of course.

With him, we discover the troubled world of Fantastica, ruled by The Childlike Empress and threatened with destruction by. . . Nothing. We meet all kinds of people and creatures. The wild-eyed Night Hob; the amazing stone giant, The Rock Biter, which will roll right over you and eat you (if you're a rock, that is); and the elegantly-garbed chap called Teeny Weeny, somewhat smaller than the Night Hob and about twenty times smaller than the rocking rock-biting thingie. Teeny gets around on a giant racing snail, by the way—it moves like rocket. Night Hob has wings. So does a small elephant. Other inhabitants (friendly, that is) of Michael Ende's wonderland world include a creature with three heads, a fellow with a fishy head and humanoid legs, a rather aristocratic type with a goat's head and a human-enough lady who's about as green as The Hulk. (Well, why not, we've already had The Thing and even James Bond's Nick Nack).

Time, though, to meet our hero, Atreyu, he's called. A great, if very young warrior, called upon to save the Childlike Empress. She's dying. Literally wasting away from a mystery ailment, inevitably connected with the takeover plans of Nothing. Bold Atreyu (played by Noah Hathaway) rides off on his wild pony, the doomed Artax, to do battle with. . . come what may.

And come, they do. The Snobs of Eternity. The Rivers of Chance. The Desert of Loneliness. The Swamps of Sadness (wherein exists poor Artax). And that's just the Ecology XI. . . On a more one-on-one basis, there's the green-eyed, evil, wolfish Gmork, complete with supernatural snarls and snaps. Plus the two guardians of the Sphinx Gate: two giant Sphinxes, with female faces and eagle wings. One flash of their eyes and you're not merely toasted, you're skeletal!

Coming to Atreyu's aid are a couple of real effects winners. First, the ancient Morla, a swamp turtle so colossal Atreyu mistakes her for a mountain to climb; and so old she's allergic to anyone less than a century. . . and Falkor, a white Luckdragon, who certainly keeps the action (and Atreyu) moving. Then, there's the little Gnome couple, Urgl and Engywook. . .

Oh, it's a heckuva good romp—reminiscent, as you'll have gathered, of many books and many films, from *Alice in Wonderland* to *The Dark Crystal*, to name but two.

Up in his attic, young Bastian (Barrett Oliver) is by turn excited and terrified by the never-ending action. At one point, he actually screams out loud. . . and in Fantastica, Atreyu and Morla turn and react to his yell. Impossible, thinks Bastian. They couldn't have heard me. Oh no. . .

Having slipped through the Sphinx Gate, Atreyu has to traverse the Magic Mirror Gate in which he'll find his true self. He looks in and sees. . . a schoolboy reading a large book in an attic.

This puts Bastian into almost total shock. He flings the book away. "This is going too far!" he says. Yes, but what if the Fantastica



Left: The ragged character known as the Teeny Weeny Man. Above: Noah Hathaway and the dog-faured Luck Dragon. Right: The Rock Biter rolls through the magical land of Fantastica.



folk really know about him. . .

Indeed, they do and once Atreyu is downed, it is, naturally, Bastian who literally enters the picture to save Fantastica and in a way himself.

Call it *Alice*, call it *Wizard of Oz*, *The Little Prince*, *Dark Crystal*, *E.T.* or anything out of the Lucas film file and you're not far wrong. The message, the moral if you will, comes from the dying Gmork (remember Gmork?) who says, "Every part, every creature of Fantastica is a piece of fantasy and dreams from mankind. It is dying because people have begun to stop believing in their dreams. So the Nothing grows stronger. It is like a despair, destroying this land of hope and dreams. A human is what he dreams—and what he does about that dream."

Bastian is riddled with self-doubt. He dreams. Yet he does not act upon his dreams until. . . almost too late. And when he makes his move, it's the making of him.

Wolfgang Petersen has said that even with such a complicated, effects-ridden tale, his 16 months on *The Never Ending Story* was not as physically draining as his three years on *The Boat*. He prefers actors to sea and submarines. "I was very pleased with my casting. Ten-year-old Barrett Oliver is a splendid Bas-



tian and we enjoyed a kind of father-son relationship during shooting. Noah Hathaway, too, is a real performer – in the Swamps of Sadness sequence, he was a true professional. And Tami Stronach's performance as the Empress, particularly as her kingdom begins to crumble in space about her is quite extraordinary. We spent months searching for the right girl for that role – and found Tami at the last minute."

Brian Johnson's team assembled what is claimed to have been the largest blue screen in the world – it's on stages 4 and 5 of the Bavaria Studios. The processing work, however, was carried out by George Lucas's ILMelves. "They've perfected the techniques," says Petersen, "so that's where everyone presently has to go to do the 'combinations' required in using the technique."

Despite this Californian connection, despite his young American leads and the fact that half the budget or so was supplied by Warner Brothers – all for what Petersen agrees seems to be a blueprint for a Hollywood spectacle – he takes pride in maintaining that it remained a European production. "Better still, a German one."

There remains one more Californian connection. Steven Spielberg

Whether or not it's because he sees they both suffered and survived the same lengthy tussles with the seas for their breakthrough movies, Spielberg has long been an admirer of Petersen's *The Boat*. Spielberg used the same sub and the old Nazi submarine pen at La Rochelle, in France, in *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. Since then, the two film-makers have become friends.

"I was flattered," Petersen told Ron Holloway in Munich, "to hear that Spielberg numbered my film among his personal favourites. So I asked him, in turn, to take a look at the rough cut off *The Never Ending Story* – and he did. Together, we were able to tighten the story by editing out some eight minutes to bridge key action sequences."

Spielberg may live to regret it! With the maestro's aid, Petersen's film was soon earning more money than *E.T.* did in West Germany.

Once the fuller returns are in from the rest of Europe, Latin America, Africa and the USA, Bernd Eichinger will make the decision for or against *Never Ending II*. "The film, after all," adds the director, "does leave off in the middle of the book."

Whatever the result of that decision, Wolfgang Petersen has proved his point – to

Hollywood. "What does he know...?" Enough to have been swiftly signed up as the rescue-mission director for the big sf film begun by Richard Loncraine, *Enemy Mine*. After a few weeks' shooting, Loncraine was ousted and Petersen brought in to direct Dennis Quaid and Louis Gosset, Jr. It's Petersen's first Hollywood assignment (even though he's shooting in Europe). He had already turned down several others after *The Boat* won several Oscar nominations – but he was tied to the *Never-Ende* project.

He's come a long way from being the unknown German director (some say, the most American of the Germans) trying to interest Roger Corman in a co-production deal to make *The Plastic Nightmare* six years ago. "Thrillers along the lines of Alfred Hitchcock and lost identities fascinate me. I've a distinct liking for movies that tell a story well – for films like *The Godfather*, *Jaws* and *Star Wars*."

Not to mention Night Hobs, Luckdragons, Rock Bikers, mountainous turtles... and acting upon one's dreams. ■

**AN INTERVIEW
WITH ARNOLD
SCHWARZENEGGER
ALIAS...**

by Randy and Jean-Marc Lofficier

Arnold Schwarzenegger's company is located in an old Gas Company building in trendy Venice, California. It has huge, high ceilings with lots of windows. The walls are covered with photographs and paintings of Schwarzenegger as bodybuilder, actor and as Conan the Barbarian.

When Schwarzenegger appeared for the interview, greatly apologetic because traffic has caused him to be late, he was dressed in shorts and a green t-shirt. With his short, light brown hair that is just starting to grey in the front, and his open friendly face, he looked anything but barbaric.

He sat in his office behind a massive desk, smoking a pipe and drinking coffee. The walls of this room are also lined with photos of Schwarzenegger, but more personal ones, including a charming shot of him with his dog. Next to it is a photo from Schwarzenegger's just completed film, *The Terminator*.

STARBURST: When you finished with the first Conan film, did you know at that time that there was going to be a second one?

ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER: Well, I have a contract for five Conan movies. But, in the end, it always has to do with how successful was the last one you made. I think that we pretty much knew that the first Conan was going to make enough money so that we would make a second one. We knew that there were a lot of "Conan" fans, fantasy movie fans, body-building fans, martial arts fans, etc. ... With that kind of combination, we knew that we had more than the normal audience that you usually have when a movie comes out. Then, it was just a question of how much further could we go with that. The movie ended up doing enough business. ... As a matter of fact, it did so well that Dino De Laurentiis and Universal both decided that they would go on and do a second one right away.

Now, we have just had sneak previews of *Conan the Destroyer*, and we have gotten the most positive reaction. So, now we know that there will most likely be a third one. In fact, Dino is already negotiating for that. So, the way it looks right now, I think there will be at least five Conan movies. I believe that the audience is growing. Universal is putting more commitment behind it. They've built this multi-million dollar Conan live show at Universal Studio Tour, which ever week gains another 50,000 or 100,000 new Conan fans. It's the most watched show that they've ever had. With all those elements, I think we will go on and do many Conan films, probably until I have a grey beard. Then, the last movie, we will call it *Conan Dies!* [laughter].

A lot of the Robert E. Howard fans were disappointed with the first film, because they didn't feel it was faithful to the Conan books that they had read. How do you feel about that?

CONAN

The Destroyer



Above: Arnold Schwarzenegger in savage action as the beefy barbarian, in *Conan the Destroyer*. Right: A portrait of Schwarzenegger in his second portrayal of Conan.

IN oyer



It couldn't have been totally faithful, because Robert E. Howard had never explained how Conan was born, how he grew up, where he was born, where he grew up, all those things. Just all of a sudden, there was Conan. So, John Milius felt that – and I think he was totally right – that he should explain all this at the beginning. So that now, there's a reason for Conan's behaviour, for his philosophies in life, and for his way of going about things. For instance, why did he end up being this muscular guy, so unlike anybody else? Why did he become such a fighting machine, and such an expert in the various different weaponries? Milius explained all that in the first movie, because he felt it was very important. Now, we can go on and do the next movies like Robert E. Howard, very loose, very light, just Conan going from adventure to adventure. The titles will be accordingly similar to Howard's books, like this one, *Conan The Destroyer*, and so on, depending on what the story is.

Had you read the script done by Marvel Comics writers Roy Thomas and Gerry Conway and what were your feelings about it?

I thought it was half decent, but I didn't feel there was any motivation whatsoever in there. It had to be rewritten. There were no two ways about it. There were some elements of it that were left in the script that we shot, which I think are good elements, and I think that they contributed somewhat to the story. But, when I read it, I called Dino right away and I said, "Listen, as far as I'm concerned, this will not make a story." What was missing in there...

What I think they didn't realize, is that a movie is not like a comic-book, where the story just starts out of nowhere and ends up nowhere. That's fine with a comic-book because you can continue next month to read on the story, and then the next month again. With a movie, it has to have a beginning, a middle and an end. There has to be a love story there, and it all has to make sense within this one and three quarters of an hour. I think that's what they missed in the script. This is why they had to have the script rewritten by somebody that is aware of how movies work. With that combination, I think we now have a great script and a great movie.

Do you feel that there are certain things that Conan has to do to be true to Conan as he's been created for the screen?

Absolutely. I think that, from the beginning to the end, he has to be based on Robert E. Howard's character. There are characteristics of Conan that are very obvious. For example, he's a man of action, he's a very impatient man, he is the kind of person that goes into action first, and then, maybe, he thinks about it! This is why he's ahead of everybody else. Other people think about going into action beforehand, and by that time, Conan has already attacked, conquered or destroyed the enemy. So, he's just a man of action all the way through. He's a brave guy. If you make Conan a less brave person, then he becomes not true to the character. He's a warrior, all the way through. Therefore, he can plan or fight big battles.

So, all of those things have to be taken from Robert E. Howard's character. The same holds true of his physical development. You could not make Conan, all of a sudden, a lean, skinny guy. He has to be a heroic he-man, muscular and all of those things. His behaviour was always portrayed as kind of animalistic. In a way, he is a human being who is like an animal. The way he moves, he jumps, he runs, he rides horses... Everything about Conan is very much instinctive and animalistic. So, all of those things have to be like Robert E. Howard originally conceived them.

What about his personality? I suppose you have to



keep him almost two-dimensional and not have him experience the "softer" emotions...

One of the things that works well in movies is when a person does show some emotions, and also exhibit a certain sense of humour. I think that, in the Conan books, you very rarely see Conan showing any real humour, like scenes where he'd look at things in a funny way, or would have fun with the adventure that he's going through. Yet, those things are important. Although that changes from year to year, right now, we know that in the movies, people like to have some comic relief, besides fantasy and adventure.

So, the way you set it up is by not necessarily making Conan himself a funny guy, but by setting him up with somebody that is his sidekick and that creates that kind of humour and comic relief. I believe this is necessary to make everyone in the audience have a moment of laughs, especially after being tense during the fighting or the dramatic scenes. The up and down, up and down, is very important in order to have a successful movie. So, there are certain things that you have to do, even if it means going a little bit off, because you have to cater to the times that you're filming for, and to today's movie audience.

Do you think that, at the end of five movies, you'll get tired of being associated with Conan?

No. First of all, I'm very loyal to Conan, because it is he who has helped me in the first place. I think that portraying the Conan character has gotten me an extra amount of exposure world-wide, and it enabled me to make a successful movie. Because of that, I feel that I have to give back the same support as I have received from this kind of character. So, I am very happy to portray Conan for five movies, or ten movies, or for the rest of my life!

Number two, I think it's a great pleasure to play a character like Conan. Everytime I've done a Conan film, I had a tremendous fun time because it lends itself to fun and to joy. It's an adventurous character, and the movies themselves are comprised of horseback riding, being outdoors, sword fighting, jumping around, being with people like Grace Jones or Wilt Chamberlain, or Jerry Lopez in the first movie... People like that are all athletic, all out-doorsy, and not the traditional actors types, which are sometimes a bummer to be with! So, because of that, I've had a lot of fun doing the Conan pictures, and I'm always looking forward to the next one. I really don't think I will get tired of it and worry about it.

The question that a lot of people ask me, of course, is whether I'm worried about being typecast. Again, I always look at the upside and never the downside. I say that I'm very happy that I'm working, and playing a character that is interesting, rather than playing in some movie that has no interest to me, and that one would just do for a salary. Conan gave me all the exposure I have, and it's a natural vehicle for me. So why should I be worried? On the contrary, I'm very proud and very happy to portray this character and do this kind of film.

Besides, I always have a chance to do other movies in between. So, I'm very happy to be in this situation, and not worried at all. Frankly, I would be a lot more worried if I had no job. That would really worry me!

The Terminator is science fiction, isn't it?

It's futuristic, it's fantasy. I play a robot that is more like an android. I meant, I am a mechanical person inside, but the outside looks like a human being. Like the name says, I'm a terminator. That means that I terminate people's lives in order to

change the future. I come back from the year 2035 to our time to kill certain people in order to change the future, by not having certain children being born that will be the leaders in the future. . . .

Of course, I'm not always very successful, because you can't really change a future that has already happened! (laughter). Anyway, it was a good attempt! It left the movie kind of wide open. At the end, Terminator gets crushed by a machine that crushes cars, and a microchip falls out and is picked up by the head of the lab there, and with that, of course, you can produce another thousand Terminators.

So there could be a second Arnold Schwarzenegger series?

Exactly. Why should the guy from Indiana Jones be the only one to have several sequels! (laughter) *You've done the Conan films, The Terminator, that funny western The Villain. Do you think that such varied films are helping to take you away from the image of being "only a bodybuilder" and force people to see you as an actor?*

I think that people realize that, with the Conan movie, you have to have more than just a bodybuilding physique. Otherwise, why is it that I am the one doing Conan, and not the other five hundred thousand competitive bodybuilders that are out there. There are a lot of great-looking bodybuilders. There are a lot of great-looking Mr Universe physiques out there. So, there's one element that sets me apart, I think, and this is the acting. And also the athletic abilities that are necessary for the film.

In The Terminator, for example, there's not one scene in the film where I am exposing my body. Therefore, I must have been hired for something else besides the body. It couldn't be the name recognition factor alone, because again, there are many other people out there with a big name. So, I like to think that again, it must be the acting. In the

case of Conan, of course, I think it's a combination. However, more and more, I think I can use the Conan films to show that I can also act, and therefore be able to do other films, like *The Terminator*. In fact, in the next four or five months, I'll be doing a film called *Outpost*, which is again, totally unrelated to bodybuilding. I think what I'm going to do is maybe a Conan film and then, one or two other movies that are unlike it, and go on like that.

Will you keep up your body-building activities as well?

I have no choice if I want to continue doing Conan movies! I have to be in shape. As a matter of fact, for Conan the Destroyer, I'm in better shape than I was for Conan the Barbarian. So, if I go on like that, I may be in an even better shape for Conan III!

But, for myself also, I always need to train and be in shape. I need to be proud of myself when I look in the mirror and say, "Yeah, I'm still in shape." That's very important to me. The idea that I'm doing something everyday physically. . . .

Do you find it difficult sometimes to find time to do that?

No. Because to me, training is like sleeping and eating. You never worry about where you find the time for sleeping, you just go to bed when you're tired. Well, the same is true with training for me. It's just part of my life. It's planned in as a necessary thing, without worrying about where I'd get the time. I just get up at six in the morning and go to the gym before breakfast, then have breakfast. At that time, there's nobody that can stand in my way and say I can't do that. During the day, of course, it would be more difficult, because I have to run to interviews or business meetings, etc. . . .

In a recent interview, you said some less than flattering things about Dino De Laurentiis that made it seem as if you didn't get along too well with him, or that you maybe had some problems with the first

movie. Have those things straightened out?

Frankly, I don't remember what I said, because I don't read back all my interviews. But I admit that we did not start off in the best way. We had some kind of friction in our first meeting. Nothing intentional really. It's just that I said things that set him off in the wrong way, and he said things that set me off in the wrong way. . . . Then, we were kind of fighting without really knowing each other. At the time, he had something against me playing Conan, but Milius said that I was the only one that could play the part, so he just accepted that fact. After seeing the first three days of dailies, he came and said to me (imitating Dino), "Hey, you are Conan." Which was kind of his way of complimenting me, and saying that I fit the character and that I was right.

Since then, of course, Dino has been very, very nice to me. He has invited me to parties and has included me in his family activities and things like that. So, all of that has straightened out in the end. I think it was just one of those funny beginnings where you just hang on top of each other, and say weird things and make each other mad and so on.

You seem to get along very well with Raffaella. . . .

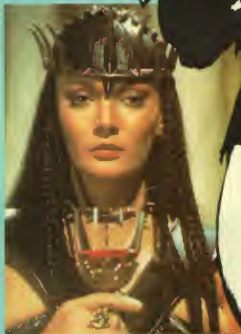
Raffaella is even easier to get along with. You see, Dino has a problem. He has been involved with over 400 movies, in one way or another. In a way, it's like me and body building, so I can relate to his position because I have no patience myself. When I run the world championships in bodybuilding, and somebody comes to me with a problem, I just brush him off. "Forget it, forget it. I have no time for that kind of crap." It's really because you have no patience, or tolerance, for this kind of thing. It has to be you way or nothing.

So, Dino is like that with the films. Many times, it somehow backfires, because you cannot be a person that knows it all. I'm aware of that, and maybe he's aware of it, but he can't help himself, because I can't help myself either!

So, that's why it's some-

Left: Arnold Schwarzenegger brandishes the savage sword of Conan. Below: Grace Jones "nightclubbing" people over the head as warrior woman Zula in Conan the Destroyer.





Top: An impressively lit subterranean set from *Conan the Destroyer*. Above left: A blonde and beautiful Princess. Above right: Another woman in Conan's life: Sarah Douglas (who played one of the Krypton villains in *Superman II*). Left: A wacky wizard! Right: The Marvel comic strip Conan, as drawn by John Buscema.



times harder to deal with him. Whereas Raffaella is enthusiastic about doing films, because she has not been involved with that many films, and you can reason with her and deal with her, and that makes it pleasant. She's the kind of woman that, when you explain something, saying, "I think we have to do it this way or this way," she says, "Arnold, I'll call you back. Let me work on it, I think you're totally right." Or when I say, "I just saw this in this script that you guys sent, and I think it's shit." She says, "I agree with you, but it's very hard with Dino," and blah, blah, blah. So, I can deal with her on this level, and we have had a good relationship.

When you work on films like *Conan*, big budget films, you can have all the comforts in the world. The contracts that I signed have so many pages that you don't even want to start counting them! But what is really important is that you have a certain kind of respect for one another, and are willing to help one another. That is never covered in a contract.

For example, in the contract, it says that I have to have a first-class trailer that is so many feet long. Well, we got into a situation where, all of a sudden, we ended up shooting on a mountain somewhere, where a trailer like that could not be brought. Now, if you stick to the letter of the contract, they in turn have to comply. But then, you get stuck, because they say, "Well, we can't shoot in that location, although it's a wonderful location, because we can't get the trailers up there the way those actors have requested it in the contract." So what happened in this case is that Raffaella came to me and told me that they had this problem. And I said, "Forget the trailer, we'll sleep in a tent up there. I know it's important to the film that we shoot at this location." And the other way around, if I need something different than it's written in the contract, then Raffaella comes through my way. So, when you do films like that, and when you want to do the next five films together, you then have to become kind of brother and sister, rather than being on opposite fences.

So you don't see yourself as the "prima donna" style actor?

No, not at all. To me, the bottom line is that, first, I get my money. Number two, that I get the attention, time-wise, that makes me look good on the film and makes me portray the character in the proper way. So, if I say to the director that I need another take, then he should do another take. If I say to Raffaella that we should re-do a scene, then she should jump for the money to re-do that scene, if it doesn't work. So, those are the important things. What matters is that you work well with people and become one unit, where one person always helps the other.

You worked very well with John Milius in the first film. Were you disappointed at first when you found out that he wasn't going to be directing the second one?

Yes. I was very disappointed when Milius was not asked to do the second *Conan* picture. Well, actually, he was asked to do it, but he couldn't because he was already committed to *Red Dawn*, the movie that he's doing now, and which he already had promised M.G.M. that he would deliver at a certain time. So, he put on certain stipulations on Dino, and Dino couldn't come through with that, because he wanted to move on with *Conan the Destroyer*, and not wait until John had time to write it and direct it. So, it was a two-sided situation where everybody was faced with the situation that, no, John just couldn't do it.

So, finally, I just accepted the fact that it was a problem in finding the right man to do it. In the beginning, when I hired Richard Fleischer, I was worried because when I met him, he looked like such a fragile, small guy. He was 67 or some years old, and I thought he didn't have the vigorous appearance that Milius had. John was always there, with an



Arnold Schwarzenegger as Conan the Destroyer. Flanked by warrior women (Grace Jones [left] and Sarah Douglas)

axe or with a sword, hacking away at people, saying, "This is the way you have to do it!" He always would talk about Ghengis Khan and all kind of historic battles and he would create a certain excitement. Richard Fleischer just didn't give that kind of appearance. But, I think it became very apparent, rather quickly, that he brought a totally different kind of quality to the film that was, again, a great asset. Which was, having the total confidence of a director who has done over forty movies, and having the ability of delegating responsibilities.

If there was a big battle scene, for instance, he would have the stunt co-ordinator take over and let him choreograph it. He was always totally relaxed and at ease. It gave you a feeling that, yes, there is somebody in total control of the thing. He always appeared like that. He was always systematic in the way he moved forward with the shooting. It never went beyond the time that was required. He was a very good director because he's very precise in the way he directs you. He's very much into rehearsals and so on. So, as we started shooting, after a few days, I felt very happy that Richard Fleischer was directing the movie. Now, after having gone through the experience and having seen the film, I have to say that I would do a movie with him

anytime again, because he was a real superb director, very sensitive to actors and very inspirational and powerful in his own quiet way.

How do you think his direction has changed *Conan*?

I think he made *Conan* less of a heavy movie, a philosophical movie, like Milius had made it, and made it more light and more like the comic books are. Also, he made it less violent. He made it a PG rating, and he put a little bit more humour in there.

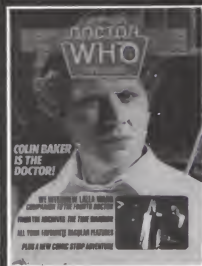
What would you like to do as projects in the future?

Right now, my big wish, besides doing the *Conan* films, is to do a Viking movie and to have John direct it. We've been talking about it several times and I think that will become reality eventually.

But then also, eventually I would like to do a comedy, because I think I can do that well. And other types of movies, of course. That's every actor's dream, to kind of broaden out eventually. But you can't force the issue, or force it upon the people, because that's when you fall on your face. You have to kind of ease in, when you do a new kind of movie. So people don't say, "I don't want to see Arnold in a comedy, I want to see him hacking away on people!"

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It's Only A MOVIE

A Film Column by John Brosnan

A nautical theme runs through this month's column, starting with my shock on hearing that Dino De Laurentis intends to remake *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea*. My initial reaction was to cry, "Is nothing sacred?" and then I began to wonder why on earth, or under the sea, Disney had sold the rights to Dino. After all, *20,000 Leagues*, like most of the earlier Disney productions, must still be a regular money-earner for the company and even though the movie has been shown on television it still enjoys a fair success whenever it's re-released theatrically. In other words, it remains one of Disney's major assets.

Then, just as a rock thrown into a pond finally reaches the bottom, it occurred to me that, of course, Disney don't own the rights to *20,000 Leagues*. As Jules Verne died more than 50 years ago (1905) the rights to all his work are in the public domain. Which means that anyone can remake *20,000 Leagues*, even Dino De Laurentis. Even, horror of horrors, Irwin Allen.

Come to think of it, the deadly Irwin has already had a go at it. He made that dismal made-for-TV thing *The Return of Captain Nemo* with Jose Ferrer as Nemo. Whatever Dino does it surely won't be as bad as that.

But why remake the movie at all? Well, for money naturally, but apart from that what are Dino's other motives? And in what way does he think his version will improve on Disney's version? Will his art designers come up with a more evocative Nautilus than the one Harper Goff designed for Disney? I doubt it. I also doubt he'll find an actor who'll be as good as James Mason in the role of Captain Nemo (I'll bet you that Dino casts his old buddy Max Von Sydow as Nemo).

Presumably Dino has plans to produce a version of *20,000 Leagues* that will have "relevance to the cinema audience of today" just as his remake of *King Kong* had relevance to the audiences of 1977 (ie, all that stuff about big business raping the environment and Kong as the symbol of the native way of life, organic food and so on. You remember). In Dino's version Nemo will be fighting a one-man campaign against the oil pollution of the seas. His targets will be the super-tankers — though how he's going to

destroy them without releasing even more oil into the water is a problem that Lorenzo Semple Jr is probably working on at this very moment.

In any event Dino's version will have to be very different from Disney's if only for the reason that the Disney Lawyers will be keeping a close eye on it to make sure that he doesn't pinch any ingredients created by the Disney film-makers rather than Verne. Apart from things like the actual design of the Nautilus, which I presume Disney has a copyright on, a large part of the plot belongs to Disney as well.

For, as the director Richard Fleischer pointed out to me during an interview several years ago, "... the odd thing is that now *20,000 Leagues* is always thought of in terms of *our* story, the story of the film, instead of what is in the actual book. You can't make a story out of a book because it doesn't have one. There is no actual plot in the novel. It really consists of a series of unrelated incidents with a few clues as to what might be a story about Nemo. So Earl Fenton, the scriptwriter, and I found it very interesting to try and reconstruct a story out of what was hinted at in the Jules Verne original."

So one can only wait with bated breath to see what Dino dredges up from the Deep. One prediction I'll make is there will be a great deal of pre-release publicity about Carlo Rambaldi's giant 200 foot long squid — a mechanical marvel capable of not only sinking ships but also climbing up the New York World Trade Center with a screaming girl in each tentacle.

MERMAID MEMORIES

Still on things nautical and Disney, I very much enjoyed *Splash*, as did everyone else I know who's seen it. Daryl Hannah so impressed me as the mermaid that I may never eat another fish finger again. But the film has made me curious to see *Miranda* again, the 1947 mermaid movie of which I have vague but pleasant memories (no, I didn't actually see it in 1947; I'm not quite that old). Glynis Johns played the mermaid in that but unlike Daryl Hannah didn't exchange her tail for legs when on land and therefore had to spend most of the film in a wheelchair pretending to be an invalid.

Miranda was a British production but the following year there was a very similar mermaid movie from America called *Mr Peabody and the Mermaid*. In this Ann Blyth played the fish-lady and like Glynis Johns had to pretend to be an invalid out of the water. According to the credits *Miranda* was based on a play by Peter Blackmore (who also wrote the screenplay) while *Mr Peabody* was based on a novel by Guy and Constance Jones but both films owe a lot to the H.G. Wells novel *The Sea Lady*, published in 1902.

The Sea Lady is a delightful fantasy — with a strong core of social satire — about a mermaid who is “rescued” by members of a family called Bunting while they’re visiting the seaside at Folkestone. The Buntings quickly adapt to having a mermaid in their midst and treat her like one of the family. After disguising her tail with a long dress they push her about in a bathchair and introduce her to people as their distant invalid cousin “Miss Waters”...

Much of the humour in the book is still amusing. Here’s a quote from the section where the Sea Lady is explaining why it’s so easy to obtain reading matter underwater: “... There was, for example, a case quite recently, the Sea Lady said, of the captain of a sailing ship whose mind had become unhinged by the huckstering uproar of the *Times* and *Daily Mail*, and who had not only bought a second-hand copy of the *Times* reprint of the “Encyclopedia Britannica” but also that dense collection of literary snacks and samples... edited by Doctor Richard Garnett. The unfortunate and misguided seaman seems to have carried the entire collection aboard with him with the pretty evident intention of coming to land in Sydney the wisest man alive. The result might have been anticipated. The mass shifted in the night, threw the whole weight of the science of the 19th

century and the literature of All Time in a virulently concentrated state on one side of his little vessel and capsize it instantly...”

The Sea Lady adopts a more serious tone as it progresses, concentrating on the bitter-sweet love affair between the mermaid and a politician called Chatteris. At the end, as in *Splash*, he decides to follow the mermaid into the sea though in this case there is the strong suggestion that Chatteris is going to his death...

Which brings me back to *Splash* and sex. Now I know that *Starburst* is a family magazine — the sort of publication you can confidently lay in the bottom of a bird cage without fear of giving your budge a seizure — but I’m afraid I have to raise this thorny subject.

Now we know that when the mermaid goes on land in *Splash* she turns into a complete human being. And as is quite obvious in the movie she and her lover (Tom Hanks) enjoy, shall we say, a satisfying physical relationship. But at the end of the movie, when they’re both swimming off together, he is still in human form while she is once again a fish from the waist down. Which leaves us with the burning question of: how are they going to do it from now on?

I mean, let’s be honest about this, making love to a fish is probably not the most exciting experience in the world. Even fish find it boring, which is not surprising when you consider that in order to reproduce they don’t need to indulge in physical contact. In fact, they don’t even need to be in the same room...

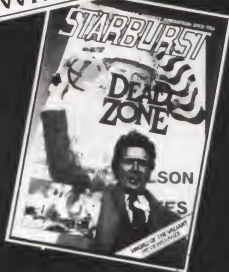
So it seems to me that once the novelty wears off the poor guy is going to start wondering what he’s doing down there on the sea bottom with an oversized mackerel as a lover.

True, we all love a good fishy tale but there are limits.



The human end of Madison the Mermaid, as played by Daryl Hannah in *Splash*.

FIRST WITH THE FANTASY



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Starburst is also a mine of information about hit genre movies of the past. Recent movies in the *Starburst Classics* spot have included the notorious *Peeping Tom* (1959), *Them!* (1954) and Vincent Price's *House of Wax* (1954).

As an added bonus, throughout the Summer, *Starburst* will be presenting a series of competitions. We'll be giving away tickets to previews of fantasy movies (beginning with *Fire and Ice* in July), and you'll get a chance to win video copies, direct from the manufacturer, of *The Twilight Zone*, *Never Say Never Again* and *WarGames*. All this plus our regular spot competitions in which we give away movie posters and other film-related memorabilia.

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the PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT

A Starburst feature by Alan Jones



In the past years, one film project has been conspicuously on and off the production schedule at New World Pictures more than any other. The title — need you ask? — is *The Philadelphia Experiment* which was first announced concurrently with the release of *The Final Countdown*, the film it shares its basic premise with.

Directors have come and gone, too, with alarming regularity. At varying times John Carpenter, Joe Dante, Harley Cokliss and Johnathan Demme were involved under the auspices of, the then, Roger Corman owned company. The only name to survive the film's tortuous history is John Carpenter, who not only shares the writing credit, but retains his Executive Producer title as well. The man who finally landed the task of getting *The Philadelphia Experiment* to the screen is Stewart Raffill, the director who did such a splendid job recently with the amusing science-fiction spoof *The Ice Pirates*.

I caught up with the very tall Mr Raffill in Los Angeles where he was overseeing the editing of *The Philadelphia Experiment* at

Lionsgate Studios in readiness for the picture's American premiere on July 13th. The rest of the world will have to wait probably until November.

The Philadelphia Experiment is set initially in 1943 and concerns the fates of actors Michael Paré, (soon to be seen in *Streets of Fire*), and Bobby DiCicco who are part of a U.S. Navy project designed to prevent enemy radar protection. Implementing Einstein's Unified Field Theory, their ship, the U.S. destroyer Eldridge, not only vanishes from sight as well. As the Eldridge crew experience the nightmare of entering another dimension and are stripped, layer by layer, to the bone, Paré and DiCicco find themselves in the middle of the Nevada desert. What they don't know is that they have come out of limbo into 1984 as well. No one will believe them of course, least of all Nancy Allen who gives them a lift in her car, until she too is faced with the reality of DiCicco being reduced to nothing but an indentation on a hospital bed. It is then that Paré learns of another military experiment along the lines of

the one that has condemned him to a never-never land of hopelessness and confusion. And, like the 1943 test, it has gone terribly wrong, creating a deadly vortex that threatens to suck all matter into its greedy opening. Paré turns out to be the very salvation of the new experiment. But can history and time be changed, or will the very fabric of the universe be jeopardized by man dabbling with the forces of nature?

With two science-fiction films in a row, Stewart Raffill's roots lie surprisingly in a totally different area. He emigrated from England with a degree in agriculture to become a farmer but instead wound up in the film industry as a wild animal trainer. All the *Tarzan* television scenes and live action Walt Disney movies have used the animals he has owned — the most famous being Cheetah the Chimp.

It was this talent that resulted in him directing the pioneering nature film *The Adventures of the Wilderness Family* in 1975 after an apprenticeship involving second unit camera work and documentaries. However, his first film was a documentary called *Hold-*

Opposite: Deck hands melt into the ship's hull as the "Philadelphia" experiment begins to go awry. Below: A production design storyboard illustrating the entry into the Vortex of Time.



CAPWICK

the PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT

But first, a few words from Raffill about *The Ice Pirates*, the MGM film fraught with production problems that he himself regards as a mess. "The film came when there was a political change at the studio. We went through three heads of production while we were trying to make it and got no support whatsoever. Originally it was called *The Seventh World* and MGM had developed it with Stanford Sherman who wrote *Krull*.

The trouble with the script was that it would have needed 15 million dollars to do it properly and MGM only wanted to spend 8 million. I read it and found it far too serious an endeavour so I told them I would only do it if I

almost didn't do *The Philadelphia Experiment* as there was such resistance to any more changes, but in the end New World agreed."

Another reason why Raffill wanted to change the script was because of the plot similarity to *The Final Countdown*. "It is very different to that film now. I wanted much more involvement with the characters so it was approachable on a human level as well as the technological one. I was intent on that in my version, so when the characters do go through some spectacular effect you are still emotionally involved with them. I must add that a lot of those qualities came from the actors themselves, especially Nancy Allen and Michael Paré who were exceptional. Originally, at the end of the script, there were several pages of justification for time travel in an attempt to educate the audience. I had a battle with my producer (Douglas Curtis – not John Carpenter whom he has never met) over that as well. Even Einstein with his genius for mathematics couldn't describe it or how it

logically damaged. The point I made when I talked to one of the Naval Personnel was that even if it were true and hundreds of sailors had died – it was a period of history when thousands were dying every day in the convoys crossing the Atlantic to help Europe. So any plan to help thwart submarine attack didn't seem like any great misuse of power considering the possible potential. We may not have received any help from the navy but we did eventually find a destroyer we could use and a lot of other equipment that we managed to include in the film as well."

Special effects work on *The Philadelphia Experiment* is being handled by Max W. Anderson who also did *The Ice Pirates*. In fact it was Anderson who suggested Raffill as director to New World when they lost their original choice, as they had started out in the business together. Stripping a body of its muscular tissue until nothing is left may sound a difficult effect to try to achieve but Raffill is only too pleased with the solarisation technique involved and the expertise with which it has been carried out by the team responsible for *Wolfen*. The 8 week shooting schedule meant extensive location work both in South Carolina, where the aircraft carrier and World War II submarine were situated, and on a desert base in Salt Lake City, historically the place where the first atom bomb was assembled and loaded on the Enola Gay headed for Hiroshima. Other pickup shots were done in Los Angeles but even so, Raffill still managed to indulge in some automatic screen writing, a trait he says petrifies people. "If I see a way of doing something better, I'm inclined to jump on it and change things on the set. When I went down to the base in Utah, there was a city block of old buildings just lying there all deserted and very run down. I thought immediately that it would make a great bonfire. So I went and saw the mayor – this really seedy old fellow – and asked if he would consider selling the block. I told him that I wanted to burn them down, but as the town needed a new sewer system he sold them to me. So I wrote that into the script for maximum production value."

Even though *The Ice Pirates* and *The Philadelphia Experiment* have proved to be more a jaunt than a jolt to Stewart Raffill after his previous mainstream indulgences, he is quick to point out that he doesn't really see his latest film as a full blown science-fiction tale. "I wanted this film to have a down to earth reality otherwise I wouldn't have been unduly concerned about the need for necessary rewrites. I didn't want to endlessly contrast the differences between the two time zones the characters experience. After the initial shock of arriving in a different time, I don't think one has to constantly make the audience aware of the newness of everything. I did try to start as powerfully as I could and then wean myself down to keep control of that reality. The plot was so substantial that I didn't have to overstate the case as it is implicit in the film."

It may be a non-union film but *The Philadelphia Experiment* is still the biggest budgeted feature ever to emerge from New World. And Stewart Raffill, now working on another science-fiction project called *The Crystal Skull*, has only the highest praise for that company. "Unlike the situation on *The Ice Pirates*, New World have been enthusiastically supportive throughout the production. I'm very impressed with their operation as not only have they been supportive of me as an artist but they have also been very free with their money. It was an exceptional experience for me because of that but then I've always felt *The Philadelphia Experiment* was a blessed project from the start."



The Philadelphia Experimenters: (l to r) producer Douglas Curtis, stars Nancy Allen and Michael Paré, and director Stewart Raffill.

could make it more comedic. So I changed the whole script as I felt it lent itself more to humour. I didn't think the seriousness of the material was warranted – *Krull* being the best example of what I mean. But I am disappointed with the way *Ice Pirates* has been treated. The ending was hacked off at the last minute and various pieces were cut for no apparent reason. It has certainly taken a battering, but I still think it holds up well for all that. I enjoyed making the movie as far as invention was concerned though. Designing original robots and creature faces really meant I could give vent to my free-flowing imagination for once."

Raffill has written virtually everything he has ever made and *The Philadelphia Experiment* turned out to be no exception. "I'm not credited though because it seemed ridiculous considering the amount of people who have been involved with writing this film. I mainly restructured the whole film in the 3 or 4 weeks prior to shooting. Because of the amount of screenplay writers involved the script had far too many holes in it. There was no love story or romantic connection, so I changed all of that. Actually there was a point where I

was possible. For us to lecture the audience simplistically was stupid. I argued that they wouldn't care anyway because it has been talked about for so long and accepted as a storytelling device so there would be no point going into empirical scientific details."

The Philadelphia Experiment is based on a best-selling book and although Raffill personally never believed the reality of the book, he began to wonder about the truth of the incident when he needed a prop destroyer and the Navy proved so resistant to help him. "The Navy has strict censorship on what films they should be involved in and they decided that *The Philadelphia Experiment* was something they wouldn't like to be connected with. They helped out on *The Final Countdown* because that was purely fictionalised account of the matter. Our film is based on the fact that a real experiment of this kind did take place back in 1943. A ship was put through a series of tests when they tried to create an electronic force field to make it invisible to radar and it did indeed disappear and displace into another time zone and then return. According to the book a lot of people were hurt in the explosion, either killed or burned or psycho-

Although *Starburst* has a separate column for book reviews, I would still like to draw your attention to two new publications about television. Both are American and, you'll be pleased to hear, are not in-depth studies of Post Darwinian philosophy (see *Doctor Who: The Unfolding Text*), or Sight and Sound meets Blue Peter. As unfortunately, most tv books elevate the "TV as Art" theory to such staggering heights, a lot of their readers are left teetering on the edge.

The first is *Universal Television: The Studio and Its Programmes 1950-1980* by Jeb H. Perry. Containing 442 pages, it makes a valuable reference guide to Universal tv series. Arranged alphabetically, with an extensive guide to telefeatures, TV pilots, Emmy awards, theatrical movies edited from series episodes and a 100 page fully cross referenced index to titles, directors, actors and actresses. In fact it's such a good idea for a book I only hope that other major tv studios follow suit. To give an example of its attention to detail I've chosen two fantasy entries.

How many people remember *Gemini Man*? Only shown the once here by the BBC. It started life as a replacement for MCA's reasonably successful *Invisible Man* starring David McCallum.

■ **Gemini Man.** NBC Television Network, September 23, 1976-October 28, 1976; - 13 episodes in colour on film; 60 minutes. An adventure programme about Sam Casey, a special agent for a world-wide, international security "think tank", who had the power of invisibility. Based on the telefeature *Gemini Man*. Cast: Sam Casey (Ben Murphy), Abby Lawrence (Katherine Crawford), Leonard Driscoll (William Sylvester). Credits: Executive Producer **Harve Bennett**; Producers **Leslie Stevens**, **Robert F. O'Neill**, **Frank Telford**; Directors **Charles R. Rondeau**, **Michael Caffey**, others; Music by **Mark Snow**, **Lee Holdridge**; Colour by **Technicolor**; Titles and Optical Effects **Universal Title**; Produced by **Harve Bennett Productions Inc.**, **Universal Television**; Exclusive Distributor: **MCA Television Limited**.

My second choice is **Rod Serling's** highly underrated series *Night Gallery*

■ **Rod Serling's Night Gallery** (Four-in-One). As an element of Four-in-One: NBC Television Network, December 16, 1970-January 20, 1971; 6 episodes in colour on film; 60 minutes. As a regular series: NBC Television Network, September 15, 1971-May 27, 1973; 22 episodes in colour on film; 60 minutes and 14 episodes in colour on film; 30 minutes. A horror anthology hosted by **Rod Serling** which presented stories in the genre of the occult, the weird and the fantastic. Based on the telefeature *Night Gallery*. Cast: Host/Narrator, **Rod Serling**. Credits: Produced by

TV ZONE

by Richard Holliss



Robert Vaughn as Napoleon Solo and Leo G. Carroll as Alexander Waverly in *the TV show The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*

Jack Laird; Created by **Rod Serling**; Directors **Douglas Heyes**, **John Meredyth Lucas**, others; Writers **Rod Serling**, **Douglas Heyes**, **Matthew Howard**, **Gene R. Kearney**, **Jerrold Freedman**, others. Music score **Robert Prince**; Theme Music by **Gil Melle**; Directors of Photography **William Margulies, A.S.C.**, **Gerald Perry Finnerman, A.S.C.**, **Lionel Lindon**; Art Director **Joseph Alves, Jr**; Gallery Paintings by **Tom Wright**; Main

Title Design **Visual Computing Corp.**; Colour by **Technicolor**; Make-up **Bud Westmore**; Production Executive **Paul Freeman**; Executive in Charge of Production **Norman Glenn**.

32 pages of stills compliment an excellent book. Also published recently is part one of a comprehensive guide to Children's television. Covering 35 years Book 2 concentrates on live action series, while Book 1 examines *Animated Cartoon Series*. I've picked

an example from Volume 1. A series screened in Britain during the Sixties. *Jonny Quest*. Sadly never repeated since it was first shown.

■ **Adventures of Jonny Quest, The** Network history. Premiere: September 18th 1964. ABC September 1964-September 1965. CBS September 1967-September 1970. ABC September 1970-September 1972. Also appeared as part of the *Godzilla Power Hour*; NBC September 1978-November 1978, and *Godzilla Super 90*; November 1978-September 1979. NBC rescreened the series September 1979-September 1981. Executive Producers/Directors: **William Hanna**, **Joseph Barbera**. Company **Hanna-Barbera Productions** 26 films. *Principal characters* and voices: **Jonny Quest** **Tim Matheson**; **Dr Benton Quest** (1964) **John Stephenson**; (1964-65) **Don Messick**; **Roger Bannon** **Mike Road**; **Hadi Danny Bravo**; **Bandit** the dog **Don Messick**.

The *Adventures of Jonny Quest* began as a prime time series on ABC and later appeared on the Saturday morning schedule of all three networks. Alerted to mysterious happenings, reports of mythical creatures, and unresolved disappearances of ships at sea and explorers in strange lands, Dr Quest and Jonny repeatedly encountered unearthly phenomena and menacing danger in their investigations. A durable series, considerably better than the average science-fiction adventure, *Jonny Quest* was carefully researched and written by **Doug Wildey**, the fourth network evening programme after the success of *The Flintstones*.

Both books are published by **Scarecrow Press** and are available from **Bailey Bros and Swinfen Ltd of Folkestone**. To round off this month's column, a look at another publication dealing with television. The new issue of *Primetime* magazine. Our own **John Brosnan** and **ex-TV Zone** writer **Tise Vahnagi** are among those responsible for some of the material gracing the pages of *Primetime*. The contents of the August '84 issue (no 6) are as follows: *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* phenomenon by **John Wyver** with a complete episode guide to the first two seasons. **Leslie Halliwell** on buying for television. **John Brosnan** investigates *The Great TV Times Mystery*. **Jack Ibberson** views "period atmosphere" in TV's *The Rivals of Sherlock Holmes* and *Sgt Cribb*. **Kim Newman** pays tribute to **Robert Muller's** *Supernatural* series from 1977. **Neil Alsop** analyses the SF genre on tv. **Stephen Dark** examines *The Twilight Zone*, and **Kevin Sutcliffe** interviews **Brian Clemens** about his work, the industry and his frustration with the medium. *Primetime* is readily available, including back issues, from **Forbidden Planet** 2.

Novelist Michael Ende has had his name taken off the credits of the film adaptation of his best-selling book. German critics didn't like it and purists of Ende's imagination hate it. Nevertheless, *The Never Ending Story* is shaping up to be one of the biggest box-office grossers ever for the Munich-based Neue Constantin Films who backed the film with a budget in excess of 22 million dollars making it the most expensive production ever mounted in Europe.

The film opened in Germany in April and will be distributed worldwide by Warner Brothers who are in the process of recutting it and adding a new Giorgio Moroder score plus theme song by Limahl. Directed by Wolfgang Peterson, who scored such a personal success with *Das Boot*, *The Never Ending Story* is a thought-provoking childish fantasy that I have to admit to giving up on about halfway through the book. Anyway, its prime concerns are in leading a misfit schoolboy through a world of collective dreams and colourful imagination called Fantastica, where he comes across all manner of weird and wonderful creatures of myth and fantasy which turns out to be a voyage of self discovery as only he has the power to extinguish the threat from this wondrous land.

As a film on this mammoth scale had never been attempted before in Germany, Neue Constantin producers Dieter Geissler and Bernd Eichinger found they had to go outside their indigenous industry and draw on the wealth of special effects talent from the pool of British craftsmen well versed in this field. First to join the team was visual effects supervisor Brian Johnson followed by special make-up effects man Colin Arthur (who executed Calibos in *Clash of the Titans*). And when Johnson realised that there would be a lot of stop-motion animation work in the picture, he telephoned Stephen Archer especially as he had heard about the sterling work he was doing on *Krull*.

Stephen Archer is Britain's great white hope for the future of stop-motion animation as his work on *Clash of the Titans* and *Krull* indicates. But his work on *The Never Ending Story* hardly stretched his capabilities at all for a variety of different reasons that he outlined to me just after he had returned from the German premiere of the film.

"When I received the phone call from Brian Johnson to discuss the film, he told me there were three characters that would have to be animated. One was a giant spider formed out of a swarm of hornets. Another was a racing snail and the last was a flying dragon. Over a period of a few months, the producers began to change their minds over the spider sequence and it was eventually cut. The snail was done as a full-size mechanical creature, so that just left the dragon and most of that was converted to a 45ft-long cable-operated model as well. As soon as I finished *Krull*, I flew to Munich. Brian had wanted me to start straight away but I couldn't, so I contacted him afterwards. One thing he did make very clear was that he wanted to use Go-motion and take the ILM approach to the stop-motion which I was all for as it is a relatively easy process. It is just a matter of recording the animation movements by computer so you can play it back and shorten or lengthen accordingly. It is a very good system for close to camera shots where you would normally notice any strobing. But as everything I did was mostly long shot I felt it was an elaborate, expensive technique to use for very little end result difference. The Go-motion rig itself had eight axes - up, down, left, right, backwards and forwards.

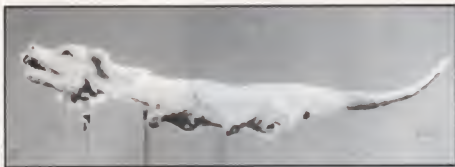
Animator Stephen Archer talks about The NEVER ENDING STORY

A Starburst Interview by Alan Jones



Above: Animator Stephen Archer (left) sits with his model Dragon creation. Below: In this scene from *The Never Ending Story* the young Atreyu (Noah Hathaway) marvels at an invention built by the Wise Man. Top right: Archer's 3ft Dragon model known as the Pink Pluto. Right: Bastian Balthazar Bux (Barrett Oliver) sits alone in his attic to read *The Never Ending Story*.





"I used two models for the dragon. The smallest was 1½ feet long supported by one rod and filmed against a blue screen. I used that for most shots. The other was 3 feet and was supported by four rods. We dubbed this model the Pink Pluto. We had to wait such a long time for the larger dragon to be built and for the engineers to finish the motion control rig for it, that by the time they were both ready we only had time to do one shot with it!

"I didn't have any say in the dragon because I wasn't really all that keen on that aspect of it. Originally, they wanted it complete with feathers but as Brian was only too well aware of the problems with animation I didn't need to tell him the headaches that would cause. I actually don't know who designed it in the end because there were so many people working on this film. The major problem for me was how to make the dragon fly as it was designed without wings. I thought about making it move like a snake—you know, an undulating movement, or like a dolphin in water. There really wasn't any other way. So I studied footage of snakes slithering and swans in flight but suddenly the producers said they didn't want it done this way. I honestly couldn't think of another way of approaching this problem. I tried large circles and curves in the air but I don't think it was a case of them not liking it so much, just that they were unsure of what exactly they did want. Finally I had to do it the way I had originally intended and eventually they seemed to like it.

"The pressure of the early April release date in Germany caused the most problems, not just for me, but for everybody. When I started on the film none of the animation had been planned for, whatsoever, as they had to put all their efforts into getting the live action finished. As there were lots of problems with the remote control creatures, most of the engineers were tied up, so I used this spare time for camera tests and the planning of certain moves. By the time I got all the equipment in September of last year, I received some bad news from Brian that the company who were going to marry up all my blue screen shots with the live footage were now unable to do it. This company had a quick method of doing that by using high resolution video link-up. So now the full load was to be shifted to ILM, but because they were up to their eyes with films like *Indiana Jones* and *Star Trek 3*, I found I had my time curtailed from 5 months to 2½ months. It was very disappointing for me.

"When Wolfgang Peterson finished all the work on the live action, he transferred his attentions to me. We used to get together in his editing room and discuss each shot as there were no storyboards. We would look at each sequence and then Juan Japí, the illustrator, would draw up a design based on our ideas. Wolfgang would then approve it and then I would go ahead. This would be repeated for each shot. It was a nice way of working for me, I suppose, but it wasn't the best way as everything should have been

planned well in advance. But then they had such little knowledge of how to approach a major effects movie. There were no facilities in Germany for this which is why the film is such a milestone for them.

"Unlike *Krull*, the shots in *The Never Ending Story* took longer to do. Every shot had to be programmed—the camera, the rig and each axis. As it was all done individually, one shot would take about a day to set up and then one or two days to finish depending on its complexity. It was difficult to do the undulations as I had to work out exactly where the support rod should go down. As I didn't get the model till quite late in the proceedings, I had to start filming straight away and couldn't get a feel for it. I did do a few tests with a wire and rubber mock-up but it didn't look anything like a dragon although I did try and keep the right proportions. It wasn't the same as using the actual model of course but there was nothing else I could do. The one model only just lasted the length of shooting too. For the armature on the little dragon, we had universal joints which were made of brass and aluminium. After a while they tend to loosen up and become difficult to set. Also the model was covered in rabbit fur which doesn't stretch although that didn't cause any problems with ruffling as he was supposed to be flying, so it didn't matter about imperceptible movements. At one point I was going to use a fan to blow the fur but it didn't really seem to make any difference.

"Had I been able to do one of the planned stronger sequences for the dragon, it would have been a better film in my view. As I had no time, the producers resorted to hanging a rubber dragon in front of the blue screen and jiggling the camera to give it some semblance of movement. There are two shots of this in the finished film and they are thankfully just brief enough not to be too horrendous. But that's the problem with the film—it's all too watered down. It was originally planned as two films with a different director and different designs. When Wolfgang Peterson came along he changed a lot of things so a lot of the pre-production money was wasted. That is why when you see the film and you know how much it cost why you wonder where all the money went. I think my work in it is OK but there quite frankly isn't much in there for anyone to get excited about. In all I did about a minute and a half of animation but they have only used a few seconds here and there. Wolfgang was pleased with my work and was very apologetic that it had to go but there was nothing anyone could do as it was primarily a financial picture. The dragon is the main character but all they have in the picture is a very ineffective full scale remote controlled model which in most shots just lies there as it couldn't walk around or do much else. In the final analysis, how much cheaper it would have been if I had done it all. But they wanted to shoot it live with 24 frames and pay a camera crew and 20 people to operate it, so they also had to pay for it out of their inexperience. Hopefully the sequel—and there will be one because of the film's success in Germany—will use all the ideas for the first one that got axed.

"The future for me looks like Charles Schneer's *Force of the Trojans* with my helping Ray Harryhausen again. At one stage I was being considered for *Santa Claus and Legend* but they scrapped the animation on the latter. *Force of the Trojans* is based on the story of Helen of Troy and I was supposed to start in April but at the moment there is a lack of studio space. I'll just sit and wait—unless anything else comes along of course." ■

Tony Crawley's THINGS TO COME

Jolly Roger

If I didn't see Dino, I did meet his latest wonderboy director, that bright New Zealand find, Roger Donaldson. He told me the tale which finally warmed me to the old fella. It's about a phone call Roger got from his boss, early—very early—one morning in L.A., when Roger was still due to make *Conan II*. "Well, if you ask me to confess, I don't think I was ever going to do *Conan*. I just had some good reasons for talking myself into it—it got me thinking outside the confines of the film I'd done before, *Smash Palace*."

The anecdote is best divided into two punchlines.

Take 1. Roger is woken at 5am, skins his hand searching for the phone in the dark, half-asleep, swearing like mad, thinking some down-under chum has forgotten the time difference. Again. "Roger! Roger!" says a voice. "And for some reason I said, He's not here! I can remember that very clearly. 'No, no, no—Dino!' Oh, I thought, somebody's looking for Dino. I said, 'No, he's not here, either.'"

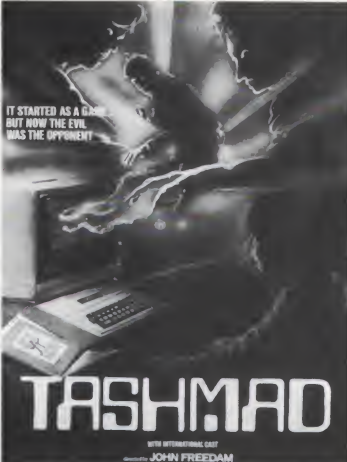
And that is when De Laurentis uttered what is fast becoming his most immortal phrase. To wit: "No, no! You, Roger—me, Dino!"

Lights . . . !

John Landis' lawyer says the *Twilight Zone* trial could last as long as six months. It's already more than two years since the triple fatality . . . Linda Evans switches from Dynastic horrors to the real Gothic variety in *Flowers in the Attic* . . . Paul Bartel is creating *Lust in the Dust*. Can't be easy as his line-up is Tab Hunter and female impersonator (I think) (I hope!) Divine . . . Jamie Lee Curtis gets Travolta in *Perfect*, so when do we ever get her back in our stuff? Never, I think . . . John Carpenter and Adrienne Barbeau have named the baby. No, it's not Clint. But close. Welcome: John Cody Carpenter. Give him 15 years and he'll be ready to star in Dad's *El Diablo*, because it sure doesn't look as if it's going to be done before then . . . *Christine*'s arch-rival, cute Alexandra Paul, turns up in a 1982 Canadian horror trip, *American Nightmare* . . .

Jolly Roger II

Okay, that phone call—Take 2. Dino wanted Roger down at his Beverly Hills Hotel suite pronto. "Emergency, emergency," he said and it sure sounded like an emergency but I wondered



Above: Cheeky. Typical Italian rip-off ad. art for John Freedom's Tashmad. No, I don't know what the hell it means, either. Except that Mr Freedom saw a film by Mr Badham. Or his poster.



Above: Cheekiest. Straight after E.T. Henry Thomas made a weepie with Gene Hackman. Here's how the Spanish sell it. The film is really Misunderstood. Henry plays Hackman's son . . . Andrew.

what could possibly be that important about *Conan* that we had to talk at 5am." When he got there, Dino, "in his great broken English," asked, "why you ask me why I do *Bounty*, yesterday?" "I thought, Hang on . . . what have I done wrong? Was it taboo—he's quite superstitious, you know. No reason, I said, I was just making polite conversation." And there followed a much (well, sometimes) maligned producer's rapid switch of ideas and another immortal phrase. "Roger—you do *The Bounty*. *Bounty*, great picture. *Conan*, a piece of shit."

See what I mean (and thanks for the tale, Roger). You've got to like old Dino when he's as honest as that.

King's Body

Untouched by human Dino, yet another Steve King film in the works. Bruce Evans and Ray Gideon are scripting *The Body* and will produce it for Embassy Pictures. Won't be long before all the shorts are used up to, by which time Dino will be shooting Steve's laundry lists . . .

Dan's Weaponry

Martian Chronicles producer Charles Fries, Chuck to the lads, is chesing after Kurt Russell, Rutger Hauer and Nastassja Kinski for his Dan O'Bannon script, *Screamers*. Sounds good so far. But Don Coscarelli, of *Phantasm* infamy, is directing. Dan's tale has to be sheer fantasy. First, it's set in the years after the US and the USSR have banned nukes and gone in for "conventional" weaponry, instead. (That'll be the day.) These new weapons, though, well, kind of turn human and then, well . . . look out, Charley!

Thongor Lives

Whatever happened to *Thongor* in the *Valley of the Demons*? You'll be surprised. The Russians are making it! The film was once due as a *Conan*-rival, if not a *Conan* predecessor from Milton Subotsky. Next and last I heard, it was becoming an animation job. Still is. But now Greek producer Frixos Constantine (Michael Powell's partner in Poseidon Films in Shaftesbury Avenue) has taken it over and making it as the second of his three co-productions with Mosfilm in Moscow. Russia supplies the animation. Britain supplies the loot, \$7m in all, and some of it coming from Robert Maxwell's British Printing Corporation.

Constantine's next Mos-deal is bigger, a \$25m version of William Goldman's fantasy novel, *Princess Bright*. All a vast change from his and Powell's first Russian deal—the life of ballerina Pavlova. Why all this Russkie interest in Western movies? They've 40,000 cinemas to fill . . . so don't laugh too loudly about Dino's *Kong* plans.

Rambaldi at Work

Carlo Rambaldi will never get his pleasure-park finished. ... With *Dune* out of the way, he's come up with a creature, worthy of Schwarzenegger in *Conan The Destroyer*. He's booked by Uncle Dino again to supply the mechanical man hero of *Ronnie Rocket*—and has a lot of stuff to do for Dino's promised remake of *20,000 Leagues Under The Sea*. (James Mason could still play Nemo, don't you agree?)

And the Others?

Rob Bottin is working on Ridley Scott's *Legend*. Nick Malley has finished his *Space Vampires* stint. And Stu Freeborn, a little outside the genre, has been creating varying wonders for Richard Gere's *King David*. But bad news from France. Director Francis Leroi has called off his big zombie project. Well, that gives his SPFXer, Pascal Pinteau, all the extra time he needs for his great big ... but no, it's not official yet and I don't want to spoil it. Next month, perhaps?

Vid Serial

Joe Dante's writer-producer on *Batman*, Michael Uslan, is a real serial nut. Hence, while the hunt for new *Caped Crusaders* goes on, Mike's producing the first old-style serial for videocassettes 15 chapters! He calls the show, *The Phantom Empire*. That's the name of the rock group having all the cliff-hanging ventures. So far, it's all for home video, but Mike says a cinema release is not out of the question.

Camera ... !

Now It Can Be Told Dept. Coppola was trying hard to win the 1984 rights from George Orwell's widow. To be frank, I wonder if Francey will ever make another film after all the horror stories about *The Cotton Club* which started as a \$29m movie and finished around \$45m and in a courtroom slanging match ... M's opposite number in Moscow, Walter Gotell — aka, Gen Gogol in the 007 films — is in Sandy Howard's new project. Of course he is; it's *KGB: Secret War* ... And Gogol's nasty mate from *Octopussy*, playwright-actor-director Steven Berkoff, has begun a Hollywood career opposite Eddie Murphy in *Beverly Hills Cop* ... The man who never got to do *Dune*, Alexandro Jodorowsky is back in surrealist-fantasies with a Mexican movie about a mother-son hit-team of religious fanatics. Yeah, sounds like him. ... Rivalry ahead, both Italian and French companies are trying to set up new versions of *Treasure Island*, with all kinds of effects ... Like what, exploding treasure-chests? ... Larry Cohen's new one, *The Stuff*, is about a new food "that's good for you", but well, kinda takes you over ... You know, like curry ...

R.I.P.

Another animation pioneer is dead. Maybe because he took his act to the tube, Bob Clampett's name was lost behind the (Spielberg, Dante) Hurrhahs for Tex Avery, Chuck Jones, etc. But Bob sure made his mark. He actually designed the first Mickey Mouse doll for Disney and during his Harman-Ising Studio days in 31, he worked on the first Warners' Merrie Melody and several Loony Tunes. Bob was an animator, alongside Chuck, at the great Avery's stable and had more than a brush-in-hand in the development of Bugs Bunny, Porky Pig, Daffy Duck, Tweety and the rest. His own zany irreverent style was let loose as a

director from 1937 with such memorable output as his *Fantasia* spoof, *Corny Concerto*, *The Great Piggy Bank Robbery* and — best of all, *Coal Black* (his *Snow White*) and *A Tale of Two Kitties*. With Warners for 16 years, he later produced at Columbia and Republic, before opening his own shop and becoming a tv rave. His ABC series, *Benny and Cecil*, began as a puppet show on a local L.A. station. Animating Beany Boy and Cecil The Seaside Serpent took them to 40 countries and three Emmy awards. It was during a hype tour, for Beany's cassettes that Bob succumbed after a heart attack in Detroit, six days before his 71st birthday.



Above: Latest phase of Christopher Reeve, swapping cape for moustache as one of The Bostonians, a 19th-century Mississippi lawyer in a triangle between Vanessa Redgrave and Madeleine Potter. *Dune* star Linda Hunt, is also in the cast.

It's Primetime

Not often I have room — or cause — to praise another magazine. But I recommend *Primetime*'s quarterly, enthralling look at tv, old and new. Early issues uncovered fascinating sidelights and thoughts on *The Outer Limits*, *The Prisoner*, *Naked City* and the tele-Hitchcock. Next ish (No 8; already!) studies *Man From UNCLE*, sf on the box, tele-Victoriana (like Jack The Ripper, Fu Manchu, Sherlock), *Twilight Zone* (the series), plus a Brian Clemens interview, and Leslie Halliwell writing



on buying Hollywood films and series for ITV — but not about cutting the movies to ribbons, of course. John Brosnan is even in there. So it's got to be good, right?

... & Akkk-shun!

Better late than never. Giorgio Moroder has finally finished his two songs for *Never Ending Story*. He was too late for the April premiere in Germany but the songs (they must've been never-ending songs!) are on the soundtrack to help boost it for the rest of the world ... Caroline Munro's *Last Horror Film*, shot during the '81 Cannes festival, has only just reached cassette form in the United States. And no other form of release. Sorry, Caro, but it wasn't good ... What was that I was saying last time about *Quest For Fire* beauty, Rae Dawn Chong, making five films in a year. That's just the five on show at Cannes. She's since knocked off John Badham's *American Flyer* and has begun *Appearances*. Seven films in about 13 months. She'll soon be in the Guinness Book of Whatnots ... Basil Poledouris is the music man for *Conan*, as he was last time ... But it's Britain's Tony Banks supplying 2010 with its electronic score ... Ron Howard settled his Cocoon cast: *Diner*'s Steve Guttenberg, plus three workaholic veterans, Hume Cronyn and his wife Jessica Tandy and Bobby Duval's pal, Wilford Brimley ... more splash than splash, I'd say. And I just did ...

Starburst Review Section

INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM

"A fantastic
rollercoaster ride."

A Starburst Film Review
by Richard Holliss

The Hero is back... claims the publicity, although the term would be more fitting of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, for *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* is advertised as a prequel to the first blockbuster. *Raiders*, at the last count, has taken nearly 115 million dollars in North America and Canada alone. *Indiana* looks certain to accompany it over the next few weeks. At time of writing it has already grossed at the American box-office, in excess of 40 million dollars.

The first question is, is it better than *Raiders*? The answer, definitely No. It is as good?, answer Yes. The story is not as convoluted as *Raiders*, in fact it's all bit too simple, but the film presents itself like a fantastic rollercoaster ride. One amazing stunt is piled on top of another amazing stunt. There is a little of *James Bond*, *Superman*, and *Big Thunder Mountain Railroad* in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*.

It's not necessary to divulge the plot, except to say that Indy (Harrison Ford), saves the day with the help of Willie Scott (Kate Capshaw), and Short Round (Ke Huy Quan), and overthrows a malicious evil surrounding the fabled Sankara stone. The film has all the appearance of a trip to the centre of the Earth, as we find the Temple of Doom towering above mighty lava flows and precipitous cliffs. Producer George Lucas and Director Steven Spielberg were no time in filling the screen with all manner of terrifying dangers, including snakes, loathsome insects, rooms with walls of knives, a trip into a fiery pit of hell and a ride on a runaway mining car that



Right: Willie Scott (Kate Capshaw) and hero Indiana Jones (Harrison Ford) in the Old Man nightclub.

manages to defy description.

Industrial Light and Magic supply the effects work, although the *Ark of the Covenant* climax in *Raiders* is replaced here by a far more down to earth conclusion. I didn't like any of the matte work or matte paintings. Perhaps Albert Whitlock could have done a better job than Michael Pangrazio and his

team of artists. The opening credits sequence is delicious in a way totally different to anything you've seen before. It also shows a talent in Spielberg's directing coupled with an excellent attention to detail from costume designer Anthony Powell. Of course, *Indiana Jones* will have its critics, those who tire of similar gags been reworked, or the fact that

Kate Capshaw is not as butch in the role of dancer Willie Scott as Indy's partner, Karen Allen in *Raiders*. But sad to say they've missed the whole point of a film like *Indiana Jones* and as those box office figures steadily climb I know who'll be proved right as to whether *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* is a good film or not.

THE ARK OF THE SUN GOD

"Numerous faults but
consistently
entertaining."

A Starburst film Review
by Alan Jones

The *Ark of the Sun God* is perhaps the most consistently entertaining film from Anthony M. Dawson/Antonio

Margheriti in a long while. In common with *Yor* it's another Italian/Turkish co-production, but unlike that absolute disaster, there's plenty of local colour coupled with panoramic vistas to keep one's attention in check when the slight plot falters.

Dawson's rep company this time rip-off *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* which is quite some feat considering how long it usually takes the Italians to come up with a carbon copy of a recent success.

David Warbeck is on hand again, and is his usual engaging self as Tick Spear, an expert safe-cracker, who arrives in Istanbul for what he thinks is a routine heist. Instead it's a test of

his abilities, elaborately set up by his old friend John Steiner who wants him to find the fabulous jeweled sceptre of the title amongst the legendary lost treasure of Semiramis, Queen of Babylonia. Quite what this powerful icon is capable of is never fully explored but it seems the Arabs are after it as well as it is an instrumental part of their world domination scheme. That, and the fraught quest to find the entrance of the lost temple, is the cause of all the conflict that keeps endangering our protagonists' lives.

The script was more or less made up as filming progressed but the patently silly story is at least constantly action-packed. Dawson's famous visual sense is far superior to

his narrative one and that is where *The Ark of the Sun God* scores most points. Considering the very low budget, the miniature work in the temple are text book examples of its craft. Not so effective are the model car chases that look like leftovers from an episode of *Thunderbirds*.

All in all, although one can find numerous faults in this pulp middle-of-the-road film, it is still a very good example of the type of efficient romp the Italians occasionally do so well. The climax alone is well worth sitting through the first hour to witness. Watch out too for stock footage from previous Warbeck/Dawson teamings like *The Last Hunter* and *Raiders of the Golden Cobra*.

FIRE AND ICE

"Every background is a beautifully illustrated canvas of form and colour."

A Starburst Film Review
by Roger P. Birchall

At last the fantasy art of the world's foremost Sword and Sorcery illustrator, Frank Frazetta, has been recreated on film.

Fire and Ice is much more than a feature-length cartoon. Imagine the fantastic world of Frazetta's paintings come to life on the screen. The film contains a dark and mysterious atmosphere that gives it a feel true to its visual origins. For practical animation purposes the characters are drawn in simple outline with flat-colour skin tones, but they inhabit an amazing world of dark, menacing jungles, volcanic infernos and colossal glaciers. Every background is a beautifully illustrated canvas of form and colour.

Director Ralph Bakshi has broken new ground with the animation in *Fire and Ice*. He has managed to get away from that boring static look (so forget *Waterhip Down* and the like) by creating the illusion of a moving camera panning across landscapes, and using lots of exciting visual devices like fades, fast cuts and radical angles. From his early work, the cult underground classic *Fritz the Cat*, the really "heavy" *Heavy Traffic*, and the highly entertaining *Wizards*, Bakshi has always been experimenting with anima-



A Sorceress attends to Princess Teegra, while the witch's hulking son looks on.

tion, and employed the revolutionary Rotoscope technique in *Lord of the Rings* and *American Pop*.

Bakshi again uses Rotoscoping in *Fire and Ice* to great effect. By filming scenes in live-action first and then using that footage as a guide for the illustrations all the figures move in dynamical perfection. And what figures! Keeping true to Frazetta's exaggerated renditions of the human physique the film's heroes are all agile musclemen, and the voluptuous heroine, the amply-built Princess Teegra, looks like most men's idea of the ultimate woman and she suggestively squirms about on a bed, wiggles her bottom and jiggles her breasts as she runs.

There is nothing very original about the story. *Fire and Ice* has all the

elements of a typical Sword and Sorcery fable. Featuring a young hero, a battle-scarred rogue and an evil wizard the plot comes straight from the same classic source material as *Star Wars*. It is interesting to note that the young blond-haired hero and the mysterious stranger who saves his life have their live-action equivalents Lucio Fulci's *Conquest*.

For a cartoon (a medium usually associated with Disney) *Fire and Ice* contains some rather perverse concepts. In typical Sword and Sorcery fashion, as well as featuring animalistic macho men, and scantily-clad maidens (who tend to get tied up a lot), the film also has a lesbian Witch, and a villain who has no desires towards the gorgeous girl but finds the young male hero "Interesting".

With all its suggested sexual imagery and the savage skull-splitting battle scenes I would imagine that *Fire and Ice* just scraped by with a PG certificate from the Film Censors. But the kids will love it. I'm sure they'll find the sight of warrior hordes astride huge flying lizards (Dragonhawks) more exciting than *Mary Poppins* who usually takes to the air on re-release over the summer holidays.

It wouldn't be surprising if some politically trendy reviewer labels *Fire and Ice* as sexist, violent and racist (with the evil sorcerer employing an army of dark natives referred to as subhumans!), the same way *Indiana Jones* and *The Temple of Doom* has been criticised. But the film succeeds in capturing the brutally savage world of Frazetta's art, perfectly.

HUNDRA

"It's very nearly great!"

A Starburst Film Review
by Alan Jones

Are you ready for the first Women's Lib sword and sorcery epic? No, well how about a film that has all the appeal of a female tag wrestling match? I thought that would get your attention! *Hundra* is both of these and a lot more besides. This camp variation on a theme directed by Matt Cimber finds Laurene Landon in great shape on the look-out for "A Man of the Bull" to perpetuate her Amazonian all female race.

Hundra, dolled up in a punk mini-skirt, apparently "Prefers a horse between her legs than a man" but she eventually finds an amorous apothecary who shows her the delights of womanhood. This new found passion is shortlived when she is thrown into a harem to learn how to be subservient to men and their gods and force to learn the incantation "Praise the Bull". At an orgy *Hundra* wonders if anyone has heard of herpes and escapes with the help of a handmaiden she has versed in the art of self-



Laurene Landon in *Hundra*, after Landon is horse buttressed her legs.

defence in return for being taught the finer points of dress and deportment at the Stone Age beauty parlour.

Hundra sounds great—and it is very nearly is. But at almost two hours in length, the joke wears very thin. Cimber invests the film with

the same photographic quality he brought to Pia Zador's *Butterfly* and Ennio Morricone's score does the usual bolstering job as well. However, *Hundra*'s greatest asset is Laurene Landon who attacks her role with such statuesque relish that it is hardly surprising to

learn that literally every Italian producer wants her for their new film.

At 85 minutes *Hundra* would have been the perfect romp but as it stands, "Praise the Bull" indeed and get me Ms Landon's phone number immediately.

Barry Forshaw, the man for whom no video experience is too awful, flies through 30 assorted fantasy tapes, sorting out the neat from the naff. Trust him and be grateful, he knows what he's talking about!

THE RETURN OF NORMAN

In the popular arts, such as the cinema (as in the fine arts) time has a way of sorting out one particular example as the ultimate yardstick of judgement. In literature, Shakespeare's plays; in music, Beethoven's symphonies; in modern popular music, the songs of The Beatles. And it's generally accepted that the finest film in the horror/suspense genre is Hitchcock's *Psycho* – it's difficult not to measure every similar film by its olympian standards of characterisation, acting, direction, scoring, etc.

Ever since 1960, when Hitchcock's marvellous terror machine barrelled into our lives, the imitations have been legion – and very few films have successfully managed to rework ideas from the original (Holt's *Taste of Fear*, Sole's *Communion*, De Palma's *Sisters/Blood Sisters*, to name but three); most have been lamentable attempts to cash in by using magpie borrowings from the Master. And although Sally Gary's column is designed for reader questions, here's a *Starburst* writer question: how many film's since *Psycho* have featured shower murders?

And now – after all these years – Richard Franklin has given us *Psycho II* (now available from CIC Video). How did he have the courage? Well, having Anthony Perkins as your star is enough to fuel the enthusiasm for a start. And working from an inventive screenplay by Tom Holland is a decided boon – Holland quite rightly keeps Norman Bates as the centre of our interest, rather than simply using the now hackneyed mechanics of the stalk 'n' slash plot to hold our attention.

Of course, Anthony Perkins' recreation of Norman Bates is one of the main reasons that *Psycho II* turns out to be such a success (the other being Franklin's quirky way with the direction of suspense, hinted at in *Patrick and Road Games*).

It's Perkins' nervous, sympathetic portrait of the central character that instantly spotlights the inadequacies of all the *Psycho* imitations, with their one-dimensional killers. And Holland's plot, which cleverly keeps the audience guessing as to who is murdering who, is respectful of the resonances set up – by the original – as well as providing the jolts that Franklin so cunningly sets up. Jerry Goldsmith provides a score that points everything with intelligence (while not effacing

Video FILE

Tape Reviews by Barry Forshaw



Molly Ringwald stars an orphaned earthling who leads a band of mercenaries across the devastated planet Terra Eleven in *Spacehunter* (RCA video).

WOULD WE LIE TO YOU?



barry forshaw, the world's toughest video reviewer, risks his all to protect starburst readers from almost certain boredom.



HITS

1. *Spacehunter* (RCA)
2. *Blue Thunder* (RCA)
3. *Strange Invaders* (Thorn/EMI)
4. *Hercules Conquers Atlantis* (Videoform)
5. *Christine* (RCA)

PITS

1. *Blood Rites* (Scorpio)
2. *Boarding House* (Horrorvision)
3. *King of Kong Island* (Intervision)
4. ... To All a Good Night (Medusa)
5. *Man with the Synthetic Brain* (Video)

memories of Bernard Herrmann's classic strings-only writing for the original).

One has to say, finally (if it need be said) that Richard Franklin is not Alfred Hitchcock. And while the original needn't blush in the comparisons I drew at the beginning of this piece, *Psycho II* is just a superior example of the thriller art. Nevertheless, provided you aren't expecting another masterpiece, you'll find a pleasingly accomplished piece of work – not the disaster you might understandably have feared.

Also new from CIC is *Nightmares*, an omnibus film directed by Joseph Sargent. Despite some effective moments, this one too often reveals its tv pilot origins.

CENSOR'S SCISSORS

I don't need to worry that the films I cover in this column may have already been reviewed in *Starburst*, as the effect of many movies is markedly different on video from the large screen experience – and it's the video version I'm reviewing.

And with *Halloween III* (Thorn EMI) we encounter for the first time a syndrome that will become very familiar – the heavily censored video version of a cinema release. As mentioned earlier in these pages, Thorn EMI, have tried to avoid prosecution by trimming Tommy Lee Wallace's film of most of Tom Burman's clever make-up effects – and I'm left with the task of telling you whether the "limbless body" is worth your attention. Well, both this magazine and *The Monthly Film Bulletin* expressed a guarded welcome for the film in its uncut form, and even in this version, I tend to agree. The movie's faults were there before any censor's scissors got to work – the brilliant Nigel Kneale's original plotting has suffered a trivialisation, and the leading characters are particularly under-developed (the influence of co-producer John Carpenter – his usual besetting sin?) but some tension is generated by the mechanics of the plot (which I won't reveal, in case you're not familiar with it) and the use of another film (which will also remain nameless) rather than Carpenter's original as a model for this sequel, which results in some pleasing touches. But one's final feelings are of a sad resignation for the laundered videos augured by this case of cutting.

DÉJÀ VU

A favourite device of many science fiction authors is the concept of cloning – one of the very few SF ideas not created by H. G. Wells (although I'm prepared to be corrected by someone who's discovered an unpublished Wells story!). However, the most common use of the idea is in the cinema – and I don't mean in the actual plots of

films (rather the use of plots!). Proof? Let's take three videos – *Nightmare Vacation* (CBS/FOX), *Eyes of a Stranger* (Warner) and *Scared to Death* (Avatar). All three are indifferent re-makes (respectively *Friday 13th*, *Rear Window* – or Carpenter's *Rear Window* clone, *Someone's Watching Me* – and *Alien*); the first (heavily cut) lacks the inventive murders visualized by Tom Savini for Cunningham's holiday-campers-in-jeopardy; *Eyes of a Stranger* misses Hitchcock's involvement with his gradually suspicious hero who comes to realise he is the neighbour of a murderer – and *Scared to Death* botches *Alien*'s tantalising glimpses of its glistening, voracious monster. All three films leave one wistfully remembering the sources of their inspiration.

EMPIRE EFFECTS

CBS/Fox have issued a fascinating item called *SPFX: The Empire Strikes Back* – and if you didn't record this item on its tv transmission, then the video is definitely worth a look. Mark Hamill narrates this revealing peek at the making of the second in Lucas' *Star Wars* saga, and there's endless interest in seeing just how those breathtaking effects are achieved. Strangely enough, the result of such revelations is not, as Ray Harryhausen once feared, a "loss of magic" – more, just a further element of pleasure in well-executed craftsmanship.

There's a special section included John Brosnan on Yoda – and say what you will, our Antipodean correspondent has got it about right! Admittedly, Yoda's a very sophisticated puppet, and beautifully operated – but compared to Rambda's E.T...! And Frank Oz's "Kermit"-like voice! And all that pseudo-Mystical Guruspeak! (Does this mean I'll be sharing some of Brosnan's outrage mail?)

THE LATE BARRY FORSHAW

Readers sometimes tell me that the reviews in this column can appear after the video release of a film (often long after!) rather than before, which would be more helpful. In my defence, I offer the two main reasons – 1. The difficulties in obtaining review copies far enough in advance of *Starburst*'s publication date (I have to wait two columns ahead of the one you're reading!) and 2. The vast amount of material (mostly woeful) that I have to cover. Anyway, in an attempt to catch up on some of the films I've missed, here's a "video countdown" of eighteen of the good, the bad and the omigawd. (Usual *Brief Notices* at the end, though – you get good value with this column!)

1. While it's true that Peter Hyam's *Outland* (Warner) is a shrewd mix

of the plot of *High Noon* with the visual look of *Alien* (not to mention another stunning score by *Alien* composer Jerry Goldsmith) I still think the film had a rough ride from the critics – not the least this magazine's John Brosnan, although I fully agree with him about the ludicrous technical gap perpetrated by one of the heavies at the end. Still, Connery is always watchable, and there's some neat editing on display.

2. It's a shame that the censor's scissors have removed more from *Torso* (Iver Film Services) than the masked murderer of the film ever does from his victims, for Sergio Martino's macabre thriller has moments of real visual style, as well as an intelligent use of Rome locations; still worth catching, despite excisions.
3. Norman J. Warren's *Terror* (Hokushin) proves that it's not only the Americans who think that a string of imaginative murders make up for a total lack of character development or involvement; the occasional half-way decent idea struggles through, though.
4. Is *Firefox* (Warner) a sf film? Clint Eastwood's foray into thought-controlled aircraft and John Dykstra special effects will probably have genre enthusiasts happily tolerating the conventional espionage plot that takes up most of the film's length.
5. Who *Slew Auntie Roo?* (Rank) – or *Whoever Slew Auntie Roo?* as the credits have it, is a disappointment from the gifted Curtis Harrington; a slack reworking of Hansel and Gretel with Shelley Winters at her most demented as the "witch" figure.
6. With *Tales That Witness Madness* (Rank), Freddie Francis' sure touch with the horror "omnibus" film

(*Tales from The Crypt*, etc.) has sadly deserted him: Kim Novak and a starchy cast flounder in tepid, slackly directed tableaux.

7. The only reason for genre fans to catch *Starlight One* (Rank) would be John Dykstra's special effects – but these are slotted into a straightforward plot through a plot that *Airplane & Co.* should surely have lain to rest by now; dull tv director Jerry Jameson does his usual.
8. *I Drink Your Blood* (Media Home Entertainment) will have you chuckling at the gory excesses of its rabid hippies; David Durston hasn't learnt the lesson of *Tobe Hooper* – that a taut delineation of the threat of violence is necessary prior to delivering the goods. But with the acting and special effects he was working with, it would have been a lost cause anyway.
9. *Don't Answer The Phone* (World of Video) has the most unintentionally unsympathetic cop heroes you'll ever see – otherwise, standard sexual psychopath stuff, indifferently turned off the assembly line.
10. Peter Straub has been unlucky in the transition of his novels to films – recently *Ghost Story* became a damp squib of a movie, and his earlier *Full Circle* emerges as *The Haunting of Julia* (Media). Under Richard Loncraine's direction, a conventional gothic thriller is the result, occasionally enlivened by the always excellent Mia Farrow.
11. Critics (myself included!) delight in finding "themes" in horror and S.F. films – but *The Blob* (Mountain Video) shows that the "fear of takeover" idea of *Invasion of The Body Snatchers* needed a Don Siegel to make it work. A couple of nice touches from director Irwin S. Yeaworth, but tacky effects, script, acting and the worst title song of all time sink this 50s effort.

BRIEF NOTICES

capsule comments by starburst video reviewer barry forshaw

A bizarre and awful *Conan* ripoff is *Barbarian Women* (Rex Video) directed by 'Al Bradley' (believe that name and you'll believe anything) – Italian schlock along the lines of *Wild Women of Wongo* (the sequel is equally inept).

There are two films (at least) called *The Fiend* – but Robert Hartford Davis' effort on Derann video is far superior to its rivals. However despite the good cast led by Patrick Magee, this is a lacklustre effort.

The "come-on" for genre fans with *Black Vengeance* (Walton) lies in the title and cassette cover. But it's not really a horror film – rather a dismal Italian saga of sex

ual revenge, with much unerotic groping. Director listed is Joe D'Amato.

The inconsistency of British film censorship is truly astonishing – the crass butchering of Brian Trenchard-Smith's *Turkey Shoot* (Guild) takes no account of the tongue-in-cheek, over the top violence being too comic strip in style to offend, and only leaves a well-plucked Turkey indeed. An Orwellian and futuristic version of *Hounds of Zoroff*, the video version is the B.B.F.C. print – cut!

The Oblong Box (Guild) was clearly intended by American-International as an addition to their Poe/Corman series – but, regrettably Gordon Hessler lacked Corman's visual style and a standard Vincent Price vehicle emerged. Perhaps, if Michael Reeves had lived to direct it, as planned...

12. You might say that *Galaxina* (Guild) is a late splash of *Barbarella* – but Jane Fonda gave some animation to her futuristic sex symbol, while Dorothy L. Stratten here essays an all-too-robotic reading of her android-in-a-white-cat-suit. Humour and special effects pall beside the even-chapter (but far superior) achievements of Carpenter's *Dark Star*.

13. *Time Walker* (Guild) is a cross-breeding of "Alien stranded on Earth" and "Murdering Mummy (Egyptian kind!)" on the loose – in Tom Kennedy's film, they're one and the same, tracked down by unlikely archaeologist Ben Murphy. Routine stuff.

14. *Black Torment* (Vampix) is a Robert Hartford-Davis period variation on the *Diaboliques*-type plot; some imaginative touches, but John Turner's performances as the increasingly persecuted nobleman is too insistently one-note and rather sinks the film.

15. *Superman Cartoon Spectacular* (Mountain) – essential viewing for Man of Steel fans – crude plots in these early Dave Fleischer specials, but the period animation has real charm.

16. *The Alchemist* (Videoform) is an indifferent Charles Band offering which yet again explores the "gateway to hell" theme – why is this potentially fascinating idea always handled in such a pedestrian way?

17. *The Entity* (CBS/Fox) is almost *Poltergeist* with the manifestations of the occult kept well out of Hooper/Spielberg's operatic range. Finally suspect in its "true story" aspects (like De Felita's earlier *Audrey Rose*), *The Entity* is efficiently directed by Sidney J. Furie.

18. Attention should be drawn to the availability on video of Ken Russell's *Altered States* (Warner) – controversial with genre fans, but Dick Smith's make-up effects are, as ever, superb – and the screenplay (ex-Paddy Chayefsky) makes some attempt to give scientists authentic sounding dialogue rather than what passes for same in most sf movies.

NEW & FORTHCOMING

From CIC, low price reissues of two Hitchcock classics, *Psycho* and *The Birds* (together with his best latter-day thriller, *Frenzy*). Further good news – they're also issuing *Jack Arnold's It Came from Outer Space*. RCA has *Krull*, *Guild Battletuck* and Embassy *Forbidden World*. From Warner, *Audrey Rose*, and from VTC, *Monster*. Of course, the biggie is *Rocky Horror Picture Show* from CBS/Fox.

Everybody seems to be writing big novels set on other planets these days. The system appears to be 1) Think up an exotic planet 2) Throw in a large cast of characters 3) Work out a story involving danger on a planet-wide scale which ensures that the action is spread all over the globe so that the reader can be treated to a guided tour of the world 4) Make sure that the book is long 5) Sit back and wait for fat royalty cheques.

I'm not suggesting that writers are that calculating, but with books such as the *Dune* and *Heliconia* series doing well at the moment, SF authors must be aware of the sales potential of broad-canvas science fiction. John Brunner has written big SF blockbusters before, but these have all been set on Earth. In *The Crucible of Time* (Arrow, £2.25) he sets out to provide a story of epic scope, covering the history of an intelligent alien race from the beginnings of their civilization to the final destruction of their planet many thousands of years later.

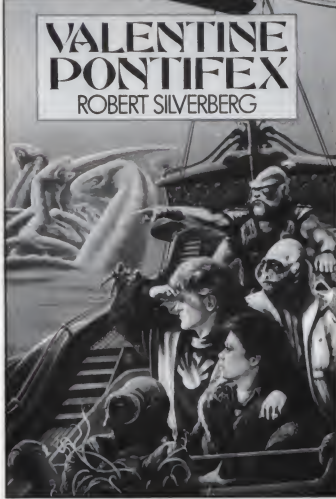
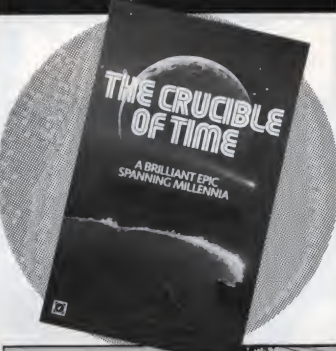
Technically speaking, Brunner has organized his material well, splitting the novel into seven loosely-linked stories set at different time periods. The threat facing his aliens is that their planet is passing through a debris-strewn arm of their galaxy and is continually subject to meteor stones, ice ages, tidal waves, and much else. The inhabitants soon come to the conclusion that their planet is ultimately doomed and that they must escape into space. The bulk of the novel focuses on the efforts of various pioneers to achieve this aim against the forces of superstition, religious prejudice and sheer apathy. And therein lies its weakness.

The author is a humane man who believed in the power of science; the whole novel is a hymn to rationality, with dedicated proto-scientists struggling to assert the cause of true progress and finally winning through in the end. The trouble is that the stories lack subtlety and complexity: Brunner portrays his unsympathetic characters as posturing buffoons, while his heroes are often lone researchers who achieve miracles of scientific enterprise single-handedly. Most of the characters are, in fact, caricatures who lecture one another *ad nauseum*, usually expounding plot information for the benefit of the reader.

In essence what we have here is pulp writing only a notch more polished than the stuff that magazines were publishing forty years ago. The author also makes more minor misjudgements which arise out of a diligence bordering on pedantry: the aliens have claws and mandibles, and this leads Brunner to perpetrate such risible phrases as "on the other claw", "more to the prong" and even "clawsomer" for handsomer. I liked the basic idea and format of this novel, and it does have a crude readability; but the imagination

BOOK WORLD

by Chris Charles



behind it seems to me to be rooted in simplistic stereotypes of human (for these aliens are very human) behaviour so that the grandeur of the story rubs shoulders with banality.

Robert Silverberg is a more sophisticated writer but also more facile of late. *Valentine Pontifex* (Gollancz, £9.95) is the third book in the author's "Majipoor" trilogy — Majipoor being yet another exotic planet, this one peopled with humans, aliens, metamorphs and even sentient water-dwelling dragons. The menace in this book is a plague of artificially-induced crop diseases which threaten to lay waste the planet until our hero, Valentine, saves the day by linking his mind with that of the dragon-king — a fashionable contrivance which I found glib and unsatisfying. The story moves effortlessly along but studiously begs any important questions — not least the desirability of living under a governmental system which closely resembles that of imperial Rome.

After all this stodge, I was favourably disposed towards John Sladek's new collection of stories, *The Lunatics of Terra* (Gollancz, £7.95). It's not perhaps as strong as some of his earlier collections, containing a lot of short, lightweight pieces which the author must have dashed off without too much trouble. But even at his lightest, Sladek is always entertaining and amusing, and this book is aptly titled since practically all the human characters in his stories are mad in some way. If you've never read Sladek before, this book is worth looking out for. The opening story begins: "When Chad Link came home from work early and found his wife in another man's arms, he asked the obvious question: Where was the other man. 'I see this pair of arms here, Daffodil, but I don't see no owner.'"

Everybody's reissuing Philip K. Dick novels these days, and *Time Out of Joint* (Penguin, £1.95) is one of his better early efforts from 1959. The story opens in a mundane and domestic way with an ordinary family in contemporary America, but gradually minor inconsistencies begin to creep in until the magic moment when the main character walks up to a soft-drink stand which fades out of existence before is very eyes, leaving a scrap of paper with SOFT-DRINK STAND printed on it. Nobody has ever been able to write like Dick, and twenty-five years on this novel remains remarkably modern.

Machines That Think edited by Isaac Asimov, Patricia S. Warrick and Martin H. Greenberg (Allen Lane, £10.95) is a bumper anthology on the theme of robots and computers containing stories from the likes of John Wyndham, A.E. Van Vogt, Harlan Ellison, Harry Harrison, Arthur C. Clarke and many others. It also manages to include no less than five stories by Isaac Asimov himself. A meaty anthology, no doubt, but personally I think that Isaac Asimov has his fingers in too many pies these days.

Summer is here. The smell of Ambre Solaire and sweat is in the air. And I'm up to my eyeballs with questions from **Starburst** readers seeking enlightenment. And if it's enlightenment you're looking for, then you came to the right place. Welcome to the filing cabinet of Dr Sally Gary, sanctuary of the culturally deprived. But now, enough padding... to the questions.

GOBLIN FAN

The first query out of the huge mail-sack this month comes from Alan Stewart of Ipswich. Alan is looking for any information I can supply on the Italian rock group Goblin. Goblin, as you already all know, have supplied the excellent soundtrack music for several of Dario Argento's shockers. And being as how I'm the world's biggest Goblin fan, I have just about all their soundtrack albums. So here's an index to all the albums issued to date

- *Profondo Rosso* (Deep Red; 1975; Cinevox/ORL 8063; Italian).
- *Roller* (not a soundtrack; 1976; Attio/LAT 1031; Canadian).
- *Il Fantastico Viaggio del "Begarozzo"* Mark (not a soundtrack; Cinevox/SC 33.37; Italian).
- *Suspiria* (1979; EMI/EMC 3222; G.B.).
- *Squadra Antigangsters* (1979; Cinevox/MDF 33.131; Italian).
- *Anno Non Anno* (1979; Cinevox; MDF 33.126; Italian).
- *Dawn of the Dead* (1979; Varese Sarabande; VC 81106; U.S.A.).
- *Patrick* (1979; Cinevox; MDF 33.133; Italian).
- *Goblin Greatest Hits* (compilation; 1980; Cinevox/ORC 8305; Italian).
- *Contamination* (1981; Cinevox/MDF 33.142; Italian).
- *Volò* (not a soundtrack; 1982; Cinevox/SC 33.45; Italian).
- *Tenebrae* (1982; Cinevox/MDF 33.157; Italian; Released in the U.K. by That's Entertainment Records).

In his *Guide to Italian Fantasy Part I*, fellow **Starburst**er Alan Jones mentions that the Mario Bava film *Schock* was scored by Goblin under the name of Libra. Now, I'm not sure I agree with this. While the *Schock* soundtrack sounds like the work of Goblin, I could find no evidence to prove the claim one way or the other. But if you're that much of a completist, here's the data: ■ *Schock* (1977; Cinevox/MDF 33.113; Italian).

And as Alan so rightly points out, Goblin music appeared in the Italian version of Romero's *Martin* (Italian Title: *Wampir*) though this was merely selections from the second (non-soundtrack) album, *Roller*. *Patrick*, which was all new music except for the tracks "Yell" (originally the title music for the Italian TV show *Sette Storie per non Dormire*) and "Snip-Snap", which appeared on *Roller*. Previously released Goblin music made up the soundtracks of *Blue Holocaust* (no

Starburst DATA BANK

Information from the filing cabinet of Dr Sally Gary



Above: One of Hammer's Seven Golden Vampires helps himself to a Chinese take-away. An horrific scene from *The Legend of the Seven Golden Vampires* (1974) [aka *The Seven Brothers Meet Dracula*. No kidding!]. Below: Doc Savage as personified by Ron Tarzan Ely, with friend, in George Pal's film version.



album available) and *Zombie Creeping Flesh*.

If you'd really like to get hold of these records, I'd suggest you stayed away from *Volò*, as it sounds more like Christopher Cross than true Goblin. (Fine if you like Christopher Cross...!) Any efficient record shop should be able to get these records for you. As you can see from the nationalities given on each record, I picked my copies up from around the world. The whole thing would be easier if you, or someone you know, can pick them up in Italy. That's it. Next!

CESARE THE WHICH?

Here's a strange one. James Fox of Nottingham writes, "In the original 1919 film *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, who played Cesare the Somnambulist? (What the heck's a Somnambulist?)"

Shame on you, Jim. Ain't you got a dictionary? Could you read one if you had? Luckily, I got a dictionary, so pay attention. *Somnambulist* n. one who sleepwalks (latin: *somnus* sleep + *ambulare* walk).

As to who plays the character... double shame on you! It was the great Conrad Veidt. But just to show we're still talking here's brief casts and credits for both Caligari pictures.

■ *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* (1919) Decla-Bioscope/Goldwyn, 81 mins. Dir: Robert Weine. Scr: Carl Mayer, Hans Jonowitz (aka, Fritz Lang). Ph: Willy Hameister. Art dir: Hermann Warm, Walter Reiman, Walter Rohrig. Cast: Conrad Veidt, Werner Krauss (as Dr Caligari), with Lil Dagover, Rudolf Klein-Rogge, Freidrich Feher.

■ Then there was the (kind of) remake: *The Cabinet of Caligari* (1962) Fox, 104 mins. Prod/dir: Robert Kay. Scr: Robert Bloch. Ph: John Russell, Sets: Howard Bristol. Cast: Dan O'Heilly, Glynn Johns, Dick Davalos, J. Pat O'Malley. *Nuff said.

THE MAN OF BRONZE

Peter Hanson, moved to put pen to paper after the recent TV showing of *Doc Savage*, asks whether the promised sequel was ever delivered. Fact of the matter is, Pete, that after the first film did so badly, due like as not to Michael Anderson's flat handling of the story, no one wanted to know. Then poor old George Pal went to that great fantasy film factory in the sky and the idea of a series of *Doc Savage* films went with him.

Pete also wants to know a little about the background of the *Doc Savage* character. *Doc Savage* was like *The Shadow*, my own favourite—the star of his own (text) magazine beginning with "The Man of Bronze" in March 1983, published by Street and Smith (later taken over by Conde Nast). The

tales were, for the most part, written by pulp scribe Lester Dent, who was responsible for 165 of the 181 published stories, though the house pseudonym "Kenneth Robeson" was used on all Doc Savage stories and on the short run of Avenger pulps put out by the same company in the late Thirties.

Most of the early Doc Savage stories were excellent thrillers, particularly "Death in Silver" and "The Mystic Mullah" (The latter featured the ethereal green snakes seen in the movie adaptation), though after you've read a few stories they begin to get a bit samey.

So successful was the character of Doc Savage that Street and Smith also published a comic book version. The details, for the data freaks, is: *Doc Savage* 1-20 (colour comic), May '40 - October '43. He also was a frequent star in S and S's *Shadow* comic. And Doc was published in comic strip form by other outfits as well. For instance, Gold Key put out one issue (adapting "The Thousand-Headed Man") in November '66. The comic boasted an excellent Frank Bama cover. Bama was also responsible for the best of the paperback covers when the series was reprinted by Bantam, during the Seventies.

For completists, Marvel Comics publishers of this illustrious journal, adapted four of the novels to comic strip form a couple of years back and followed that with a run of original stories penned by Doug Moench and drawn by John Buscema and Tony DeZuniga. The details:

- *Doc Savage* 1-8 (colour comic: adapts "Man of Bronze", "Death in Silver", "The Monsters" and "Brand of the Werewolf"). October '72-January '74.
- *Doc Savage* 1-8 (black and white magazine), August '75-April '77. How's that?

NIGHT OF THE BLIND DRUNK

Ian Roger Kerr of Fleetwood, Lancs dropped me a line to let me know that after watching Hammer's *Legend of the 7 Golden Vampires* he was irresistibly reminded of a old Spanish movie about the Knights Templar and asks if I can tell him anything about it.

Sure can, Ian. The film's original title was *Tombs of the Blind Dead* (1972, 86 mins; aka, *Night of the Blind Dead*, US title *The Blind Dead*). The director was Amando de Ossario and he wrote the script, too. Makeup was by Jose Luis Campos, photography by Pablo Rupall, and the English language adaptation was by Robert Oliver. Actors involved were (stop me if you've heard of any of them) Lone Fleming, Cesar Burner, Helen Hays, Joseph Thelma, Victoria Llimera and Rufing Ingels and the story's all about the mummified, blood-drinking, animated corpses of the Knights Templar

monks, rising from the grave to terrify a bunch of train passengers. I've never seen the film myself, but everything I've ever read about it tends to indicate that it's a pretty superior piece of scare-mongering.

VARIETY IS THE SPICE

Dermot Foley of County Tyrone wants to know how he can obtain the American showbiz journal *Variety* by mail order. Boy, Dermot, you are dedicated. It's not cheap, you know, and being published weekly, an annual sub starts coming to money. But, a fair quezzy deserves a fair answer, so... A year's sub (52 issues) of *Variety* costs \$85.00,

surface mail and should be sent to Variety Inc, 154 West 46th Street, New York, NY 10036, U.S.A. Air mail obviously comes a bit more expensive and to find out those rates you'll have to contact the London Variety office at 49 St James' Street, London SW1A 1JX (tel: 01-493 4561). Come on, Dermot, I can't do everything for you! Listen, save your money and subscribe to *Starburst* (you'll find the necessary info in the small print on page 3) and let us tell you everything you need to know. Trust us!

THE WRAP-UP

And that's about it for another month.

Apologies to those of you who have written and not had their question answered. I have to stress that I just don't have time in my life for getting into personal correspondence with readers, no matter how rich or handsome they are. No exceptions!

In the meantime, send all your fantasy queries to:

**Starburst Data Bank,
Starburst magazine,
Marvel Comics Ltd,
23 Redan Place,
London W2 4SA.**



Left: *Long Live the Man of Bronze!* A comic book portrait of Doc Savage as drawn by popular American artist, Neal Adams.

STARBURST-JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED!

As you read this page, there are thousands of people, all over Britain, who are in the grip of a terrible, debilitating condition which affects both mind and body in a most relentless fashion. Fantasy Confusion Syndrome is the term specialists have coined, though you and I know it better as F.C.S.

But what can be done to help these unfortunates? As medical science stands at the moment, not much. The experts seem unable to agree on the proper course of action.

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